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Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

Report by the Chair

Report by the Chair of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

1 February 2017

I. Achievements over the past twelve months

1. The main achievements in 2016, as highlighted in the reports of the seventy-seventh session and the Special Session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management, are outlined below.

Sustainable housing and real estate markets

2. The Committee's seventy-seventh session, which was held on 13 and 14 September 2016 in Geneva, brought together 293 participants, including representatives of 45 member States, 4 UN agencies and multiple partner organizations. As decided at the seventy-seventh session, the Committee also held a special session on 1-2 December 2016 to discuss preparations for the Ministerial segment to be held as part of the Committee's seventy-eighth session on 8-10 November 2017. As part of the special session, a briefing was held on the outcomes of Habitat III with the participation of the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic and the Executive Secretary. They highlighted the importance of the Conference and the work of the Committee for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

3. The Committee endorsed the Guidance for the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing (ECE/HBP/2016/2)^a which includes recommendations for the implementation of the Charter. In accordance with the Guidance, Geneva UN Charter centres should be established in order to disseminate and promote the principles of the Charter. So far, such centres are being established in Albania, Estonia and the United Kingdom. The secretariat is undertaking a study on best practices in the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. The Memorandum of Understanding for the centre in Albania was signed on 14 December 2016 between UNECE and the Ministry of Urban Development.

4. The Committee encouraged other member States, local governments and stakeholder organizations to support the implementation of the Charter through support to the secretariat and the establishment of Charter centres.

5. The Committee agreed on a number of activities to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Committee in 2017, including a Ministerial Segment during the seventy-eighth session and the adoption of a Declaration, the publication of a brochure and the translation of the Geneva UN Charter into national languages.

6. It also co-organized the "Conference on Housing Finance – Market and Structures" on 14 November 2016, in Berlin, Germany, with the support of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group. The conference discussed the situation with the housing finance and policies supporting achieving affordable housing finance in Germany and other European countries.

Sustainable land administration and management

7. The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) participated in the: (i) Fourth High Level Forum on United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), including the First UN Expert Group meeting on Land Administration and Management (UN-EG-LAM) on 19 April 2016 in, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The WPLA is a partner in the UN-EG-LAM and

^a https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2016/ECE_HBP_2016_2.en.pdf

will help prepare the Land Tenure Atlas of the World. and (ii) the “EU INSPIRE Conference” on 26-30 September 2016 in Barcelona, Spain. The work of the WPLA was presented in the workshop: Financing the Evolution of Spatial Data Infrastructures. This workshop addressed funding approaches, national budgeting schemas, and the experience of actors on different levels (European, macro-regional, national/sub-national), drawing evidence from the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Bank, UNECE and the EC Joint Research Centre (JRC).

8. It also organized two workshops in 2016. The “CENTRIC UNECE/WPLA Seminar” held in Bucharest, Romania, on 18 May 2016, informed on the implementation of the CENTRIC project part of the EU Horizon 2020 programme. The main purpose of CENTRIC is to create a Centre of Excellence which will be capable to achieve, in the medium to long-term, strong scientific presence at the EU and international level, acquiring a position that will enable it to actively participate in and influence developments in scientific domains such as 3D/4D geospatial data, linked geospatial data, land classification, remotely sensed data, etc. The other workshop, “State and market: Cadastres and Property Right Registers,” was held in Madrid, Spain, 24-25 November 2016. This workshop focused on the functions of Cadastres and Registries, their respective role related to the State and to the real estate and mortgage market and the ways of interaction to satisfy social and economic needs in UNECE member States.

9. In 2016, the *Literature Review: Informal settlements in countries with economies in transition*^b was produced. It represents a first step in the preparation of potential technical guidelines on informal settlements in the UNECE countries with economies in transition. Its aim is to analyze and identify the main themes and issues to be covered by the future guidelines. A follow up study with recommendations will be carried out in 2017 subject to available resources.

Country profiles on housing and land management

10. The Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management of Armenia and Kazakhstan are under way. Their finalization and publication will be completed in 2017. An evaluation of the role of the UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management from 1996 to 2015 was carried out in 2016. The evaluation concluded that the country profile programme is relevant and effective in achieving its objectives. It also makes a number of recommendations aimed at improving mechanisms for the preparation, execution, monitoring and follow-up of the country profile analytical study. The evaluation recommends the improvement of fundraising, the broadening of partnerships, the promotion of peer-review and online tools for collaboration, the alignment of the goals and objectives of the programme with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The guidelines for the preparation of country profiles will be updated to reflect the recommendations of the evaluation and will be presented for approval at the 78th session of the Committee.

Sustainable urban development

11. The Committee endorsed the revised Key Performance Indicators on Smart Sustainable Cities to address the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/HBP/2016/4), and a report on activities under the United Smart Cities project. The secretariat informed the Committee about the launch of the global initiative, *United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC)*, in cooperation with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

12. The Committee was actively involved in the preparations of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held on 17-20 October 2016, in Quito, Ecuador. The Government of the Czech Republic hosted, with the support of UNECE, the “European Habitat” Conference in Prague in March 2016 which facilitated new partnerships between all stakeholders in the UNECE region. The Prague Declaration, an official input to Habitat III which promotes an

^b <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43153>

integrated approach to urban development with special attention to affordable adequate housing, was an important outcome of the Conference.

13. At the third Habitat III Preparatory Committee meeting, as with the first and second, UNECE held side events where it informed on the progress of the implementation of the Regional Roadmap towards Habitat III.

14. In Quito, UNECE co-organized 12 events with many valued partners, member States and the UN family such as UN-HABITAT, Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNIDO, UNEP, ITU, OHCHR, as well as Housing Europe on topics such as:

- a) Smart sustainable cities with ITU and ECLAC;
- b) Road Safety with the Special Envoy for Road Safety, Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB);
- c) Regional Implementation of the New Urban Agenda jointly with the other Regional Commissions;
- d) Affordable and Adequate Housing with the Government of Albania and other partners;
- e) Importance of security of tenure with the Government of Germany;
- f) Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in CIS countries with the government of Kazakhstan and UN-Habitat;
- g) Sustainable buildings with the Government of France and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction;
- h) Energy and resource efficiency through sustainable construction and urban planning also with the Government of Germany and UNEP;
- i) Sustainable Urban and Territorial Planning with UN-Habitat;

and also participated in the *High-level Roundtable - Adequate and Affordable Housing* where among others, Mr. Julian Castro, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, United States of America, Her Excellency Karla Šlechtová, Minister of Regional Development, Czech Republic and Ms. Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur for Housing, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), participated.

15. The UNECE coordinated the preparation of the Habitat III “Report on Housing and Urban Development for the UNECE Region - Towards a City-focused, People-centred and Integrated Approach to the New Urban Agenda”, which provided input into the New Urban Agenda adopted by Habitat III. The Report was submitted to the Habitat III secretariat in March 2016 and the final publication is awaited. The draft version is available on the UNECE housing and land management webpage^c. The Report was prepared under the supervision of the Habitat III secretariat, in cooperation with regional offices of UN-Habitat, and through regular consultations with representatives of other UN agencies, international organizations, and academia, as well as other UNECE divisions. The process of the preparation of the Report included teleconferences with the Habitat III secretariat and the organization of three expert group meetings.

16. The Report documented key trends in housing and urban development in the UNECE region over the last 20 years and was organized under the following topics: Trends and patterns of urbanization and demography; The economy of cities; Living in cities; Environment and risk; Governance; and Outlook and future trends.

17. The UNECE, in cooperation with the Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER), and the Austrian Economic Center (AEC) and the Government of Liechtenstein organized the “Financing Smart Sustainable Cities Forum Liechtenstein”, on 7-8 November 2016 in Ruggell, Liechtenstein. The Forum identified sources of funding and opportunities for financing and implementing smart sustainable urban solutions, determined practical solutions to facilitate the transition into smart sustainable cities,

^c <https://www.unece.org/housing/habitat3regionalreport.html>

discussed business models and good practices for financing smart sustainable cities, and determined the role of standards and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor economic growth and encourage governance and participation. The Forum highlighted the strategic role of the financial sector in the transition of cities into smart sustainable cities and as a key actor in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

II. Major activities planned for 2017 and beyond

18. In 2017, the Committee will continue to work with member States to promote access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing, and sustainable urban development.

Sustainable housing and real estate markets

19. The Committee will include a Ministerial Segment on 9 November 2017 as part of its seventy-eighth session. It will also adopt a Ministerial Declaration on Housing and Urban Development on that occasion.

20. The Committee will continue to promote the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing through the establishment of a network of Geneva UN Charter Centres in member States, in cooperation with the countries and qualified partner organizations. Such centres will support the secretariat in the dissemination of information on the Charter, conduct studies and organize capacity-building activities at national and regional levels.

21. Energy efficiency in buildings will remain a priority in the work of the Committee, also in partnership with the UNECE Division on Sustainable Energy, especially as this will support the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

22. The Committee's Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) will update its publication, "Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets", taking into account the adoption of the UN SDGs, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, and other relevant policy documents. It will also organize two workshops.

Sustainable urban development

23. The Committee is actively involved in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda with an integrated approach, which promotes close links with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and other important global political frameworks as they pertain to housing and land management.

24. The Committee will continue to leverage and make full use of regional platforms and mechanisms, notably the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development convened by the Regional Commissions, as platforms for peer learning, addressing regional priorities and linking the national and global levels.

25. Activities will include, among others, the preparation of regional guidelines on territorial planning, based on those developed in the UN-Habitat International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, and work on selected case studies in cities in the UNECE region. In addition, the Committee will build on collaborations with partners on PPPs and municipal finance issues as well as stronger collaborations with DG Regio and with the World Economic Forum.

26. The Committee will cooperate with other UN agencies (UN-Habitat, FAO, UNISDR, WHO, etc.) and UNECE intergovernmental bodies on the development of a system for the monitoring of urban SDGs, starting with SDG 11 on Cities and Human Settlements.

Land administration and management

27. The WPLA will have its tenth session on 8-9 March 2017 in Geneva. The session will focus on how sustainable land management can help to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda towards better, safer and more balanced human settlements and sustainable cities.
28. The WPLA will organize two workshops on land administration in 2017: in Lausanne, Switzerland, 21 April 2017 and the other in Vienna, Austria in October 2017.
29. Work will continue on the benchmarking studies on land administration systems.
30. The UNECE will also continue cooperation with the FAO and UN-Habitat and the World Bank on the Technical Guidelines on Informal Settlements in the ECE Region.

Country profiles on housing and land management

31. The Committee will continue preparing Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management as long as financial resources are made available. After the finalization and launch of the country profiles for Armenia and Kazakhstan, the secretariat aims to start preparations for the country profile of Belarus.

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

32. No changes are proposed. The Committee considered and approved the Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Land Administration and recommended that the Executive Committee renew the mandate and the revised Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Land Administration for 2016-2020.

IV. Follow-up of the 2015 session of the ECE

33. The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing was endorsed by the UNECE at its session on 16 April 2015 (E/ECE/1478/Rev.1). At its seventy-seventh session in 2016, the Committee endorsed the Guidance for the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing as mentioned earlier.

V. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing ones

Sustainable housing and real estate markets

34. Regular cooperation was established with the Committee on Sustainable Energy (CSE) on energy efficiency in buildings. The CHLM conducts regional workshops on energy efficiency in buildings as part of the annual International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, led by the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division. Cooperation in the work on a principles-based performance standard in buildings for the ECE region will continue.
35. Cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) on energy efficiency in buildings with wooden frames will continue.

Sustainable urban development

36. The Committee involved representatives of other UNECE divisions in the drafting of the Habitat III Report for the UNECE Region, and in the implementation of the Regional Roadmap. A joint side event with the UNECE/WHO Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) was organized during the European Habitat conference.

37. The CHLM secretariat is cooperating with THE PEP in the context of the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2017. It will also continue to cooperate with THE PEP in view of the relevance of the Committee's activities on sustainable urban development for the implementation of THE PEP priority goal 5.

Country profiles on housing and land management

38. The Committee secretariat cooperates with the UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) team, by participating in the review of the EPR draft chapters on housing and environment. The two teams also exchange relevant country information.

VI. Technical cooperation activities

39. The Committee continued the implementation of the United Nations Development Account project "Strengthening national capacities for sustainable housing in selected countries with economies in transition". This is a joint project with UN-Habitat. In 2016, the UNECE and UN-Habitat assisted Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan in the development of National Action Plans for Sustainable Housing and Urban Development.

40. As a result of the project so far, guidelines were developed for drafting the National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of recommendations of UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management in transition economies on the basis of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. The guidelines aim to assist governments to organize the work of the institutions which are supposed to ensure the implementation of the National Action Plan in a balanced and sustainable way; to identify and use reserves to improve the efficiency of the implementation of activities in the sphere of housing and land management; to organize interaction between all major stakeholders, including government, businesses, local self-governing authorities, international organizations and foreign donors. The draft NAP of Republic of Moldova and Serbia were developed and the NAPs of Armenia and Tajikistan are being developed. NAPs based on the guidelines will be presented by the participants at the regional workshop in Belgrade, Serbia on 31 January-2 February 2017.

41. During 2016, one national validation workshop to discuss the NAP was organized in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 26 April 2016. At the validation workshop, proposals for the NAP were presented by the government; those were based on policy recommendations of the country profile and other relevant projects and studies. Representatives of UNECE shared information on international studies and guidance documents which could be useful for the preparation, and later for the implementation, of the NAPs. The proposals for the NAPs were then discussed by the national and international experts who informed on existing experiences and practices which should be taken into account in the NAPs.

42. The Committee also started implementation of the United Nations Development Account project "Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition". This is a joint project with UN-Habitat. The project aim is to strengthen national capacities for the development of evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in four selected countries: Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. In 2016, the UNECE and UN-Habitat carried out an advisory mission to the Kyrgyz Republic to assess the needs of the country and discuss approaches and technical tools for the collection of data on housing, urban development and land administration relevant to sustainable development and human settlements.

43. Information on the projects and related activities is widely disseminated through the projects' websites, which also contains information on the workshops (including presentations and workshop reports); the UNECE e-mail list on housing and urban development; the UNECE weekly newsletter; and social media posts (Twitter, LinkedIn).

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

44. Given the very interdisciplinary nature of the housing sector, urban development and land management, the Committee is very engaged in intersectoral and other cooperation with other organizations, and builds its work on the synergies with its partners.

Sustainable housing and real estate markets

45. The CHLM cooperates regularly with UN-Habitat, the OHCHR, WHO, the Housing Europe Association, the International Union of Tenants, and other pan-European networks of organizations and cities, on issues related to affordable and healthy housing.

46. Cooperation with international organizations, such as the International Standards (ISO) and others, on energy efficiency in buildings will be organized through the work on the UNECE Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

47. The Committee is a co-organizer of the Europe Housing Forum, which is held bi-annually. The Forum co-organizers are UN Habitat, UNECE, UNDP, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Habitat for Humanity International. The Forum brings together a wide spectrum of stakeholders from across the UNECE region.

Sustainable urban development

48. The Committee is working together with its partner UN agencies on different aspects of urban planning and management. For instance, cooperation with its key partners, UN-Habitat, the ITU and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), is organized through regular joint events, presentations at each other's meetings, and the review of documents and publications.

49. The Committee has engaged representatives of other UN agencies, the European Commission, other international organizations and academia in the drafting of the Habitat III Report for the UNECE Region, and in the implementation of the Regional Roadmap.

50. The CHLM secretariat coordinates its work with other UN regional commissions, in the drafting process of the Habitat III regional reports and organizing the implementation of regional roadmaps, and activities in the follow-up to Habitat III. To exchange experiences on this work, the commissions conduct regular teleconferences and organize joint events, and this will continue for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

51. The United Smart Cities project^d is a platform involving the UNECE, UN-Habitat, the ITU, private sector organizations, academia, NGOs, individual cities and city networks.

Land administration and management

52. Under the Memorandum of Understanding on Land Administration and Management with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the WPLA is collaborating under a bi-annual cooperation plan with the latter, as well as with the World Bank and the European Commission Joint Research Centre.

53. The Working Party regularly cooperates on the organization of joint events and studies with other international organizations involved in land administration in the region, including Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE), EuroGeographics, Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union (PCC), European Land Information Service (EULIS), FAO, European Land Registrars Association (ELRA), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), UNISDR,

^d <http://www.unece.org/housing/smartcities.html>

OHCHR, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UN-Habitat, and others. It organizes annual meetings of international organizations and agencies, which serve as a neutral platform to discuss how to best work together to improve land management and land administration in the UNECE region. It will hold its third meeting of international organizations working in land administration in 2017.

Country profiles on housing and land management

54. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the results of the Country Profiles, the Committee establishes cooperation with the UNDP offices in the countries where the Profiles are prepared. The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was involved in the preparation of an urban planning chapter of the Country Profile for Armenia.
