

Workshop Report

Theme: Trends and challenges in sustainable housing, urban development and land management in the Republic of Armenia

Organizers State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
United Nations Development Programme Office in Armenia

Date and venue 11.09.2017, Ani Plaza Hotel, Ani Hall, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia

Organization and presence

1. On 11 September 2017, the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia supported by the European Economic Commission of the United Nations, the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT) and the United Nations Development Programme Office in Armenia, organized the international workshop on national capacity building in the field of housing, urban planning and land management.
2. The Action plan in the field of housing, urban planning and land management for the years 2017-2025 was presented at the workshop and sustainable development problems of human settlements were highlighted, with particular focus on housing. The workshop served as a platform for discussions aimed to find new ways of responding to the challenges of human settlements development, including the housing sector, urbanization and land management. The workshop combined the inputs of central and local public administration bodies, non-governmental organizations and private sector organizations in the urban planning development and housing policy.
3. The event took place in Yerevan, the Republic of Armenia, during the period of 11 September 2017.
4. The event was in the Armenian, Russian and English languages with simultaneous translation.
5. The event was attended by representatives of regional and local public administration bodies at the level of regions and Yerevan Municipality, and various organizations active in urban and housing planning, representatives of government institutions (particularly ministries/agencies), the UNECE secretariat, along with local and international experts.
6. Mass media (press) representatives were also present at the conference.

Objectives

Different stakeholders gathered in Yerevan, at the workshop to discuss priority issues in the field of housing, urban planning and land management. The event was organized by the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, with the objective to present key outcomes and recommendations of the Country Profile on Housing and Land Management, discuss its

implementation through the National Action Plan and present the findings of the Smart Sustainable City Profile Goris.

Opening of the workshop

At the opening of the workshop **Mr. Narek SARGSYAN**, Chairman of the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of the Republic of Armenia, welcomed the participants, thanked the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Programme Armenia and the United Nations Human Settlements Program for the organization of the conference and presented the current situation in the housing sector in the country. The official also highlighted that the prerequisites for the current workshop were laid down in 2015 by signing two memorandums of understanding between the interested parties: one for elaboration of the Country profiles on housing and land management and the second for elaboration of Smart City pilot project for the city of Goris. The Chairman mentioned about the Country profiles and its recommendations as well as the draft National Action Plan in which future activities (including deadlines and financial estimates) are mentioned for implementation of the CP's recommendations. He wished very productive work for the participants of the workshop.

During the opening session **Mr. Vache TERTERYAN**, First Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia, welcomed the participants and talked about the problems of the sustainable development of human settlements, stressing the need for better integration of regional development planning and spatial planning measures to achieve wider benefits for all communities of the country.

During the opening session **Mr. Dmitry MARYASIN**, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Armenia welcomed the participants of the workshop and mentioned that UNDP Armenia has been in close cooperation with local stakeholders for elaboration of the Country Profiles on housing and land management as well as the Goris smart city initiative. He also highlighted the projects on which UNDP Armenia has been working over the years, particularly on energy efficiency improvement in housing, disaster risks reduction etc.

During the opening session **Mrs. Ivonne HIGUERO**, Director, Forests, Land and Housing Division, UNECE welcomed the participants of the workshop and mentioned that the current work related to elaboration of the National Action Plan is based on the Country Profiles' recommendations, which has been elaborated within the frames of cooperation of UNECE, UNDP Armenia, UN HABITAT and Armenian stakeholders with active participation of international and national experts. She also mentioned that it will be very important the adoption of the NAP at government level and its implementation.

During the opening session **Mr. Remy SIETCHIPING**, Leader, Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit, Urban Planning and Design Branch, UN-Habitat, who welcomed all the participants and thanked the organizers. She also talked about the action plan and its implementation, and pointed out the strategic objectives, implementation requirements, sources of financing – a factor for successful implementation, and responsible agencies.

The Conference was a one-day event formed of four sessions in addition to the opening session. Topics of the sessions and presentations made on the workshop day were as follows:

Session I. Country Profile Armenia: presentation of the key outcomes and policy recommendations

The first presentation was made by **Mrs. Cecilia BATAK**, Country Profile Coordinator, Housing and Land Management Unit, UNECE, who mentioned that the **Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management** serve as a valuable tool to analyse countries' policies,

strategies, and legal, institutional and financial frameworks in the areas of housing, urban development, and land administration and management.

She also gave details of the entire process of the initiation and elaboration of the Country Profiles for Armenia. She also provided the elaborated recommendations for improving of the respective sectors.

The second presentation was made by **Mrs. Irina GENTSLER**, Head of Housing Section, Institute for Urban Economics, Moscow, Russian Federation. In the beginning she outlined key problems existing in the housing sector. She also provided general recommendations for improving the housing sector as well as specific recommendations, particularly on creation of affordable rental housing sector, involvement of homeowners in the management of multi-apartment buildings, developing market for services of management and maintenance of multi-apartment buildings, support for capital repairs and increasing of energy efficiency of multi-apartment buildings and state assistance to households for payment of communal-housing services.

During this session, **the third presentation** was made by **Mrs. Evgenia ZHELEZOVA** from the Agency for Housing and Mortgage Lending, Russian Federation who presented an overview of the current situation in housing finance sector of Armenia. She also provided practical solutions for the existing problems. Afterwards, she made recommendations on creation of an institution responsible for overall housing policy in the country, provision of stable inflow of investments into the housing sector, development of new credit products.

Mr. Remy SIETCHIPING, Leader, Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit, Urban Planning and Design Branch, UN-Habitat and **Mrs. Fernanda LONARDONI**, Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch, UN-Habitat, made brief interventions on the CP recommendations on housing.

In the end of the first session **the sixth presentation** was made by **Mrs. Julie BARRY**, Land registration specialist, HM Land Registry, United Kingdom who presented the areas of the research in land management during the Country Profile preparation. She also presented international best practice as well as key findings and recommendations to improve the land management in the country.

Session II. Presentation of the draft National Action Plan in the areas of housing, urban development and land management of the Republic of Armenia for the period of 2017-2025

1. Information on the preparation of the National Action Plan:

The first presentation was made by **Mrs. Regina KHANBEKOVA**, Project Coordinator, Housing and Land Management Unit, UNECE who provided an overview of the “Strengthening national capacities for sustainable housing, urban development and land management in countries with economies in transition” project. Particularly she mentioned that the project implementation period is from March 2014 to December 2017 and beneficiary countries are Armenia, Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan. Main activities are advisory missions, national and regional workshops, development of National Action Plans and development of a policy paper.

The second presentation was made by **Mr. Arsen KARAPETYAN**, Director of “Development Solutions Institute” Foundation, national expert who presented the draft National action plan (NAP) of Armenia on housing, urban development and land management. Particularly he presented the aim of developing a NAP, key areas (e.g. Urban development, Housing Policy, Housing and public utilities, Construction, Land and property relations and Energy saving and energy efficiency), goals and objectives. The NAP is divided into three stages as follows: 2017-2018, 2019-2020 and 2021-2025. In total 48 measures are envisioned for objectives to achieve the pre-defined goals. Measures are directed towards elaboration of legal acts, regulation of legal framework, analysis of existing issues, and fulfilment of several projects.

The third presentation was made by **Mrs. Yevgenya ATAYAN**, Adviser, the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia who presented follow up activities towards implementation of the NAP Armenia. In particular she mentioned that by the national action plan activities are envisaged along with the implementers, expected outputs as well as initial financial assessment per financing sources. She also added that for implementation of the NAP about 120 mln. USD will be required, of which 28% will come from the state budget. The NAP is constructed based on 30% of co-financing from international donor organizations. She also mentioned about possible risks and difficulties regarding implementation of the NAP.

The fourth presentation was made by **Mr. Hakob HOVHANNISYAN**, Head of Division of real estate cadaster valuation of the State Committee of the Real Estate Cadaster adjunct to the Government of Armenia who presented the current legislation of real estate cadaster valuation in the Republic of Armenia and new approaches for assessment of real estate.

The fifth presentation was made by **Mrs. Irina ILYINA**, Director of the Institute for Regional Studies and Urban Planning, Russian Federation, international project expert. Her speech was focused on emerging trends and challenges to sustainable urban development in Armenia and the CIS sub-region. Particularly she mentioned about characteristics and special features of the CIS cities and development tendency. She also presented conceptual approaches to models of development of urban infrastructure by providing 4 basic models.

The sixth presentation was made by **Mr. Remy SIETCHIPING**, Leader, Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit, Urban Planning and Design Branch, UN-Habitat who provided comments on the CP recommendations on housing. Particularly he emphasized the importance of quick implementation of the action plans, activities with immediate impacts, sustainability through legislation and continuous monitoring and evaluation. He also talked about the action plan indicators and contingency plans. He also provided examples of implementing national action plans from different countries.

Session III. Follow up and reflections on the CP recommendations

The first presentation was made by **Mrs. Hasmik KHACHATRYAN**, Chief Specialist, Department of Housing Stock Management and Communal Infrastructures of the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia who presented the role of the state in solving of housing issues of certain groups of population. Particularly state obligations have been formed towards families who became homeless due to natural and man-made disasters, refugees, families living in emergency multi-apartment buildings subject to demolition, homeless families of killed (died) or invalid servicemen, persons classified as children without parental care and single pensioners. Because of the adopted and implemented programs about 21000 families have improved their housing condition in the last 10 years.

The second presentation was made by **Mr. Jora SARGSYAN**, Head of Department of Labor and Employment of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia who presented the draft target program for provision of housing for persons of separate social categories. He mentioned that the program has five sub-programs as follow:

1. Provision of a newly built apartment or an apartment acquired from the real estate secondary market
2. Provision of a newly built apartment or an apartment acquired from the real estate secondary market by means of cooperating organization or provision of an apartment belonging to the cooperating organization on an ownership right
3. Provision of an apartment with prefabricated structures after construction
4. Subsidization of mortgage loan for an apartment
5. Provision of an apartment belonging to the community on an ownership right.

The third presentation was made by **Mrs. Lusine ISKANDARYAN**, Head of Division for Provision of Clarifications of the Department of Legal Support of the Ministry of Justice who presented current activities directed towards improvement of legislation of the sector of management of multi-apartment buildings. Particularly an interagency working group has been formed based on the Prime Minister's decree in which key stakeholders (such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development, the State Urban Development Committee, Yerevan Municipality) are involved. The IWG has developed a draft law on making amendments into law "On management of multi-apartment building", which is being still discussed among the members of the working group.

The fourth presentation was made by **Mrs. Tanya ARZUMANYAN**, Head of Department of Housing Stock Management and Communal Infrastructures of the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia who presented the technical state of the multi-apartment residential buildings, approaches for their rehabilitation and repairs. She mentioned that there are about 19000 multi-apartment buildings with 28 million m² and about 62 % of the all multi-apartment buildings has been built until 1980. Along with technical data on the housing stock she also presented the situation related to management of multi-apartment buildings. In particular she mentioned that 66.4% (or about 8000) of the buildings located in urban communities are managed by entities created by homeowners. She also presented the measures envisaged by the GoA 2017-2022 program.

The fifth presentation was made by **Mr. Harutyun KHACHATRYAN**, Head of Division of works with condominiums of the Yerevan Municipality who presented basic provisions for ensuring fulfillment of mandatory norms of maintenance of multi-apartment buildings. He presented that there are about 4900 multi-apartment buildings in Yerevan, of which about 4500 are managed by condominiums and the remaining by other types of management forms. For ensuring fulfillment of mandatory norms of maintenance of multi-apartment buildings he pointed out key issues, particularly low level of financial flows for management, maintenance and exploitation of multi-apartment housing stock, low level of collection of maintenance fees, high level of physical depreciation of the stock, non-efficient management of the housing stock and low level of awareness about their rights and responsibilities among homeowners.

The sixth presentation was made by **Mrs. Domenica CARRIERO**, Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings Project Coordinator, Housing and Land Management Unit, UNECE who presented key aspects of the "Promoting energy efficiency in buildings in the UNECE region" project. Among other things, she mentioned about the survey of building standards and building regulations in UNECE region. She also mentioned about the Joint Task Force on EE standards in buildings, which has started its activities in September 2017 and is comprised of members from national governments, academia, NGOs, independent experts, international organisations. She pointed out the main activities of the JTF as follows : mapping of EE standards in buildings and

appropriate technologies, creating an online database of experts, development of gap analysis and roadmap and best practices compendium.

The seventh presentation was made by **Mr. Vahram JALALYAN**, Task Leader, UNDP Armenia who presented the newly launched “De-risking investments aimed at energy efficiency in buildings” UNDP managed project, which is being financed through a 20 million USD grant from Green Climate Fund. He also mentioned that the new project is based on the success of previous UNDP-GEF project on improving of energy efficiency in buildings. The new project will be implemented within 6 years and will have four components such as creation of MRV system for buildings and knowledge management, reduction of policy risks, reduction of financial risks and financial incentives. The project will be focused on residential and public buildings.

The eighth presentation was made by **Mr. Sergey ARZUMANYAN**, AREEM Project Manager, Habitat for Humanity Armenia who presented HfH’s projects on improving energy efficiency in multi-apartment buildings. He presented key details about the following projects: “Access to Renewable and Efficient Energy in Municipalities Vayk and Spitak” (AREEM), “Residential Energy Efficiency for Low-income Households” (REELIH) and “Renewable Energy Financing”. He also mentioned that due to efforts made by Habitat Armenia more than 6000 low- and middle-income level households have improved their housing conditions. He also mentioned about barriers for implementation of projects in multi-apartment buildings.

The ninth presentation was made by **Mrs. Astghine PASOYAN**, Foundation to Save Energy who presented a road map for improving energy efficiency in buildings of the RA. She mentioned about the importance of energy efficiency in general and for Armenia in particular. She also presented the review of policies, strategies and regulations in energy efficiency. She also presented energy saving potential for different sectors as well as the newly adopted National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2nd phase).

Session IV. Smart Sustainable City Profile Goris: presentation of the outcomes and recommendations

The first presentation was made by **Mrs. Domenica CARRIERO**, United Smart Sustainable Cities Project Coordinator, Housing and Land Management Unit, UNECE who presented the overview of “United Smart Sustainable Cities” project as well as the process of the Smart Sustainable City Profile for Goris. She particularly mentioned that launched in 2014 the United Smart Cities is a program which aims at addressing the major urban issues in sustainable development and its financing in medium-sized cities in particular in countries with economy in transition. She also presented the whole process for developing the Smart Sustainable City Profile for Goris (e.g. workshops, indicators selection etc.)

The second presentation was made by **Mrs. Nune HARUTYUNYAN**, Smart Sustainable Cities Project National Coordinator, Director, Regional Environmental Center for Caucasus who presented the “United Smart Cities Project: Goris case study”. She particularly presented the philosophy of the Goris smart city, the thematic components (economy, environment, society). She also presented the profile of the city, including the assessment of different sectors of the city as well as recommendations for making Goris as a smart city.

The third presentation was made by **Mrs. Nune PETROSYAN**, Project manager, OJSC “Armproject” who presented smart spatial planning as a coordinating tool for creation of favorable spatial environment. She presented the spatial planning system of Armenia, particularly its 4 level hierarchic system and the polycentric urban framework of RA territory.

She presented the spatial planning tasks in details, formation of main goals, short and long-term objectives as well as the proposed actions to make the city smarter.

Conclusions of the workshop

Concluding session. Wrap-up and future steps

Mr. Armen GHULARYAN, Deputy Chairman of the State Urban Development Committee adjunct to the Government of Armenia **and Mrs. Ivonne HIGUERO**, Director, Forests, Land and Housing Division, UNECE thanked all participants for the participation and summarized the topics that were discussed during the workshop, appreciated the workshop efficiency, the timeliness of the issues addressed, the efficiency of recommendations provided by presenters. They mentioned that the National Action Plan will be refined and sent to key stakeholders for final opinion, afterwards the GoA will take necessary measures to implement it within the defined timeframe.