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Item 9-19 of the provisional agenda

Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2021 and 2022

Activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eighty-second session

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides information on the activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eighty-second session, in October 2021, and outlines a list of activities for 2023.

The Committee is invited to take note of the information on activities implemented. The Committee is also invited to approve, subject to the availability of funding, the list of activities proposed for 2023 needed to implement the programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme.



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

1. In 2021-2022, the Committee continued supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Housing and Urban Development and the Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030.¹ The following activities were implemented.

A. Affordable, accessible and healthy housing for women and youth

1. Study “#Housing2030 – Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE Region”

2. The study “#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region” was developed by ECE and Housing Europe in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and published in 2021. The study explores the following four topics: (a) housing governance and regulation; (b) access to finance and funding; (c) access and availability of land for housing construction; and (d) climate-neutral housing construction and renovation. It also addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the housing sector and highlights good practices for improving the affordability and long-term sustainability of housing.

3. The aim of the study is to: (a) provide an analysis of housing affordability challenges and existing policy instruments for improving housing affordability in the ECE region; (b) facilitate the exchange and dissemination of good practices in improving housing affordability among countries and cities of the ECE region; and (c) identify the needs of policymakers to further develop and implement policies for addressing housing affordability.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

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

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

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

5. The following activities were implemented to discuss the study:

(a) Side event to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) on “Decarbonising the housing stock in an inclusive and affordable way” (Glasgow, 4 November 2021);

(b) Event organized as part of the Europe Housing Forum “#Housing2030 – Time to Think and Do Differently. How to combine energy and social policies to address energy poverty in Central and Eastern Europe” (Brussels, 18 November 2021);

(c) Presentation of “#Housing2030” initiative at the Barcelona Housing and Renovation Forum (Barcelona, 24 November 2021);

(d) “Housing2030: effective policies for affordable housing in the ECE region”, a side event to the Second Forum of Mayors (Geneva, 6 April 2022);

¹ For detailed information on meetings and publications, please see the website at <https://unece.org/housing>.

(e) H22 City Expo Dialogue of Eminent Experts on smart, sustainable and inclusive cities, (Helsingborg, 31 May-1 June 2022);

(f) Side event to the International Housing Festival “Climate-neutral housing - Decarbonizing the housing stock in an inclusive and affordable way” (Helsinki, 15 June 2022);

(g) Side events to the World Urban Forum “Innovative financing for cities”, “Affordable, adequate and climate neutral housing” and “National Urban Policies” (Katowice, 27-30 June 2022).

6. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on housing: podcast “Your #Housing2030 Making a House a Home”² series, #Housing2030 website at housing2030.org and on social media platforms of ECE, UN-Habitat and Housing Europe.

2. 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

7. The draft Regional Action Plan was endorsed by the ECE Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (Geneva, 6 and 7 October 2021) and was published with illustrative sketches by renowned architect Norman Foster (ECE/HBP/215).

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

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

9. The following impacts were observed as a result of work on the Regional Action Plan:

(a) Increased awareness among local and national governments in the ECE region about the Regional Action Plan;

(b) Identification of the main priorities and capacity needs of local and national governments in the ECE region for implementing the Regional Action Plan.

10. The following activities were implemented to discuss the Regional Action Plan:

(a) Housing2030: effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region, a side event to the Second Forum of Mayors (Geneva, 6 April 2022);

(b) H22 City Expo Dialogue of Eminent Experts on smart, sustainable and inclusive cities, (Helsingborg, 31 May-1 June 2022);

(c) Side event to the International Housing Festival “Climate-neutral housing - Decarbonizing the housing stock in an inclusive and affordable way” (Helsinki, 15 June 2022);

(d) Side events to the World Urban Forum “Innovative financing for cities”, “Affordable, adequate and climate neutral housing” and “National Urban Policies” (Katowice, 27-30 June 2022).

² <https://www.housing2030.org/podcasts>

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

B. Matters arising since the last Committee session

12. The secretariat supported the implementation of relevant United Nations and international agreements and protocols of direct relevance to housing, land management and urban development, including the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Local2030 Initiative through organization of the following events:

(a) Climate Breakfast of Mayors and a side event on decarbonization of the housing stock at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) (Glasgow, 31 October–12 December 2021);

(b) Side events to the Second Forum of Mayors (Geneva, 4 to 6 April 2022);

(c) Panel discussion “Bolstering the roles of urban professionals, local and national authorities in localizing and implementing the New Urban Agenda” as part of the High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 28 April 2022);

(d) Side events to the ECE 2020 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, 6 to 8 October 2022);

(e) One UN event and side and networking events to the Eleventh World Urban Forum “Transforming our Cities for a Better Urban Future” (Katowice, 26 to 30 June 2022);

(f) Active participation in the Making Cities Resilience 2030 initiative. The secretariat participated in regular coordination meetings with other United Nations agencies to promote city resilience in Eastern and South-East Europe and Central Asia;

(g) Active participation in the Local2030 initiative coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Habitat.

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

13. 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 Committee Bureau, the secretariat launched activities to help cities recover from the pandemic and build more resilient economies and societies.

1. Project on “Post COVID-19 Recovery in Informal Settlements in the ECE Region”

14. The project aimed at strengthening the capacity of national and local governments in ECE countries to address the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements. It was implemented in 2020 and 2021 with funds from the ECE Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

15. The following impacts were observed as a result of work on post COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements:

(a) Identification of the different factors affecting post-COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements; and the needs of the most vulnerable groups living in these settlements;

(b) National and local governments in the ECE region provided with evidence-based policy recommendations to support post-COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements and address the needs of the most vulnerable groups living in these settlements.

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

(a) Publication “COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements for countries in the ECE region” (ECE/HBP/214);

(b) Online subregional training workshops: “Kickstarting the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region - Western Balkans” (10 November 2021); and “Kickstarting the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region – CIS, Ukraine and Georgia” (12 November 2021);

(c) Concrete recommendations for upgrading informal settlements and supporting post-pandemic recovery in four pilot cities - Albania (Tirana), Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek), Montenegro (Podgorica) and North Macedonia (Skopje);

(d) Online courses - Guidelines for the Formalization of Informal Constructions; and Implementing COVID-19 Recovery Action Plans for Informal Settlements.³

17. 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. “Rapid response” project on building urban economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

18. This project was being implemented from 2020 to 2022 by the five regional commissions of the United Nations with funds from the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) programme and in cooperation with UN-Habitat and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). The project focused on strengthening the capacities of local governments in 16 cities to promote urban. It involved the development of an urban economic resilience diagnostic and planning tool and the exchange of good practices in developing and implementing post-COVID-19 recovery plans.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

19. The following impacts were observed as a result of work on COVID-19 recovery:

(a) Improved understanding of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting implications for urban development;

(b) Increased capacity of local and national governments to address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

20. The following outputs related to work on urban resilience and COVID-19 recovery were delivered:

(a) “Regional Policy Brief: Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19 in the UNECE Region”;

³ Available at: <https://www.cityresiliencetraining.com/course/>

(b) City COVID-19 impact assessment reports for Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Kharkiv (Ukraine) and Tirana (Albania), including economic recovery and resilience action plans for each city;

(c) Collaboration with the Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA) to help ECE beneficiary cities mobilise the required resources for implementing the recommendations. CDIA held a Virtual Clinic in Bishkek and helped the city develop a concept note for elaborating bankable project proposals.

21. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on urban resilience and COVID-19 recovery: a dedicated project website at www.urbaneconomicresilience.org; press releases; and ECE social media platforms.

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

22. The secretariat, in cooperation with the municipalities in Norway, the Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Development Goal City Transition in Trondheim and other relevant stakeholders, developed Guidelines for the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Smart Sustainable Cities (SSC) in the preparation of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). The draft Guidelines were endorsed by the Committee at its eighty-second session.

23. The draft VLR Guidelines provide cities with a standardized approach to localizing the SDGs and to reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The secretariat updated the draft VLR Guidelines, in collaboration with development partners, as requested by the Committee at its eighty-second session. The updated Guidelines are expected to be endorsed by the Committee at its eighty-third session.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

24. The following outputs related to VLRs were delivered:

(a) An online training module on VLRs⁴;

(b) Updated Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/2022/6).

25. The following events related to VLRs were organized:

(a) Side events to the Second Forum of Mayors (Geneva, 4 to 6 April 2022);

(b) Side events to the World Urban Forum (Katowice, Poland, 27-30 June 2022).

26. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on VLRs: a dedicated joint project website with the United Nations regional commissions and UN-Habitat⁵, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

D. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative

27. 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 use by cities, and membership includes 14 United Nations organizations and programmes.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.cityresiliencetraining.com/course/>.

⁵ www.urbaneconomicresilience.org

The ECE Forests, Land and Housing Division, in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN-Habitat, coordinates the U4SSC activities.

28. In the framework of the U4SSC initiative, the Committee secretariat implemented the following activities to promote smart sustainable cities.

1. U4SSC thematic group on Innovative Financing

29. The “Compendium of Practices on Innovative Financing” was finalized and published. The Compendium will be used as training material to support capacity-building activities in cities in the ECE region.

2. UNDA 12th tranche project “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region”

30. The project is implemented jointly with UN-Habitat from 2020 to 2023 and supports the transition of selected beneficiary cities – Grodno (Belarus), Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tbilisi (Georgia), and Podgorica (Montenegro) - towards smartness and sustainability with a view to accelerating the implementation of SDG 11 and other urban-related SDGs. In 2021-2022, the drafts of the Smart Sustainable City Profiles of Podgorica and Tbilisi were completed.

3. UNDA 12th tranche project “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”

31. Through this project, the five United Nations regional commissions and UN-Habitat supported national governments and selected cities in increasing policy coherence as well as developing national capacities and expertise skills for supporting the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and ensuring a greater integration of the regional, national and local dimensions of the NUA.

32. The project involved the following activities: (a) building the capacity of national-and local-level decision makers in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda and urban SDGs; (b) establishing mechanisms for sharing of information and successful practices; and (c) facilitating an inclusive process of knowledge generation and dissemination through regional monitoring and reporting on sustainable urbanization. In the ECE region, the city of Almaty (Kazakhstan) is the beneficiary of the project. A draft smart sustainable city profile was developed for the city and will be finalized by end of 2022.

4. “Improved sustainable urban development in Norwegian cities” project

33. This project was implemented in 2020-2021 with funds from the City of Trondheim, Norway. It involved the evaluation of the performance of cities in Norway against the KPIs for SSC and the development of Smart Sustainable Cities Profiles. The project also supported the dissemination of the experiences of Norway in the preparation of VLRs.

5. “Strengthening capacity for the implementation of urban-related SDGs in San Marino through the development of the City Profile on Smart Sustainable Urban Development” project

34. This project started in 2022 to assist the Government of San Marino in implementing the urban-related SDGs. The project involved the development of a Smart Sustainable City Profile for San Marino using the KPIs for SSC and the dissemination of the experiences of San Marino in promoting smart sustainable urban development.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

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

(a) Local and national government provided with KPIs and recommendations for developing and implementing evidence-based sustainable urban policies;

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

36. Online local and subregional capacity-building events and expert group meetings to exchange ideas and best practices were organized within the UNDA projects mentioned under heading D. The following outputs related to smart sustainable cities were delivered:

(a) *Smart Sustainable Cities Profiles: Aalesund, Asker, Baerum, Rana and Trondheim in Norway* (ECE/HBP/211);

(b) *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: San Marino*, presents the outcomes of the evaluation of San Marino against the KPIs for SSC and proposes actions for the city-country to make progress towards achieving the SDGs;

(c) *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Podgorica, Montenegro*, present the outcomes of the evaluation of Montenegro against the KPIs for SSC, and proposes actions for the city to make progress towards achieving the SDGs;

(d) *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Tbilisi, Georgia*, present the outcomes of the evaluation of Tbilisi against the KPIs for SSC, and proposes actions for the city to make progress towards achieving the SDGs;

(e) KPI evaluation for the city of Almaty, which will be used for preparing the *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Almaty, Kazakhstan*.

E. Promoting multilevel governance through the ECE Forum of Mayors

37. The Second Forum of Mayors took place on 4 and 5 April 2022, in Geneva, Switzerland, back-to-back with the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD), as mandated by the ECE Executive Committee (ECE/EX/2020/L.16).

38. The Second Forum was held under the theme “Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing the implementation of the SDGs” and was chaired by the Committee Chair, Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania). It brought together around 500 online and in-person participants, representing cities and member States from across the ECE region and beyond, the United Nations regional commissions and specialized organizations, non-governmental organizations and the academia.

39. Mayors and vice-mayors from 44 cities shared their experiences in finding people-centred solutions, which simultaneously meet the needs and aspirations of their citizens, hedge against disasters and rise to the challenges of climate change in a manner that ensures the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These experiences were shared during the four thematic sessions of the Forum, which focused on global challenges identified in the Geneva Declaration of Mayors⁶: sustainable urban transport, shared mobility and safer roads; vibrant public spaces, greener cities and nature-based solutions; resilient, healthy and

⁶ The Geneva Declaration of Mayors is available at <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Mayors%20declaration%20booklet%20-%20ver.4.pdf>.

climate-neutral buildings and affordable and adequate housing; and sustainable urban planning, the 15-minute city and smart urban development solutions.

40. The Second Forum of Mayors also featured three side events, which were jointly organized with UN-Habitat, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Health Organization, the Geneva Cities Hub and the University of Geneva, to enable participants to delve deeper into the issues raised during the thematic sessions. In addition, ECE signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) with the aim of showing how football and hosting UEFA events can support cities to become more sustainable. The MoU was signed during a side event “Football as accelerator of change”, held in-person at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 5 April 2022.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

41. The Second Forum of Mayors received wide media coverage. It generated 195 articles and 858 social media posts, which reached a readership of 756,273,594 and 11,191,829 followers. This high level of interest signals the success of the Forum in anchoring itself as a practical mechanism for realizing the forward-looking vision of the United Nations Secretary-General of “a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system, anchored within the United Nations”.⁷

42. The Forum provided substantive input to the reports of RFSD and the Committee in accordance with the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) decision ECE/EX/2020/L.16. A summary of the discussions was prepared by the secretariat (ECE/HBP/2022/3) and presented to RFSD on 6 April 2022 by the rapporteur of the Second Forum of Mayors, Ms. Josiane Lei, mayor of Evian, France. In addition, a document containing the future scenario of the Forum, as envisaged by the participating mayors from the ECE region, was informally approved for the consideration of the Committee (ECE/HBP/2022/1).

43. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the Second Forum of Mayors:

- (a) Dedicated website at <https://forumofmayors.unece.org>, which also provided information on previous meetings – Day of Cities (2019) and the first Forum of Mayors (2020) – and on relevant good practices, events, guidance documents and publications;
- (b) Social media platforms of ECE and its partners;
- (c) Press releases;
- (d) Video on the Second Forum of Mayors⁸.

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

44. To support the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, endorsed by ECE member States in 2015, eight Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities have been established⁹. The Centres

⁷ *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations publication, 2021). Available at <https://unfoundation.org/our-common-agenda>.

⁸ https://youtu.be/aKh-zp_J9PA.

⁹ 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

provide capacity-building and training activities; conduct research and analysis on housing and urban development policies; and undertake outreach activities to promote the Charter. They also engage in a range of activities on the ground within their specialization and expertise.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

45. The following impacts were observed as a result of the activities of the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence:

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

46. The following outputs related to the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence were delivered:

(a) The Centre of Excellence in Canada developed a three-year roadmap for flagship events and key deliverables to advance collaboration, research and policy to prevent and end youth homelessness in countries with limited access to donor funds;

(b) The Centre of Excellence in Estonia launched a Local Energy Poverty Alleviation Office in January 2022 within the context of the European Union *POWERPOOR* initiative¹⁰. The Office serves as a focal point for helping citizens and enterprises find information about energy poverty, identify whether they suffer from the phenomenon, and obtain advice on low-cost energy efficiency measures, funding schemes, and/or behavioural changes that can enhance energy efficiency;

(c) The Centre of Excellence in Italy consolidated the content of its multilingual portal, including a tableau de bord on European infrastructure funds,¹¹ and will be publishing a book titled “PPP & Private Capital for sustainable infrastructure and smart cities”;

(d) The Centre of Excellence in Norway collected and analysed the KPIs for SSC for 17 Norwegian cities and prepared five detailed UNECE smart sustainable cities profiles (ECE/HBP/211). It also contributed to the ECE online training module on VLRs and provided a case study on “Powerhouse”, the first energy-positive building in Trondheim. In addition, the Centre developed the training curriculum “Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Development” in cooperation with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), the BI Norwegian Business School (student association) and the Nord University (Norway). This curriculum is based on the experience of Norway in promoting effective stakeholder engagement, intermunicipal cooperation and strengthened collaboration between local, regional and national governments for localizing the SDGs;

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 LIUC – Cattaneo University, Italy; (viii) Centre of Excellence on the Forum of Mayors and Sustainable Urban Development at the Norman Foster Foundation, Spain.

¹⁰ <https://powerpoor.eu/>.

¹¹ <https://exsuf.liuc.it/>.

(e) The Centre of Excellence in Spain is leading the development of a new masterplan for the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine. In addition, Norman Foster developed the logo of the Second Forum of Mayors;

(f) The Centre of Excellence in Switzerland is developing the data visualization of the KPIs for SSC for use in ECE Smart Sustainable City Profiles. The Centre also developed an open-access e-learning platform¹² to host United Nations 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;

(g) The Centre of Excellence in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland contributed to a major study “Scotland’s Urban AGE 2022”, which showed 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).¹³

47. The following activities related to the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence were organized:

- (a) The Centre of Excellence in Albania held/contributed to the following events:
- (i) Workshops on Resilient Cities and Emergent Urbanism (Tirana, October 2021);
 - (ii) Online international workshop for PhD students “Planning Cities for the Post-Pandemic/Crisis Era”, jointly with Polis University (Tirana, Albania) and *Università di Ferrara* (Ferrara, Italy), on 1 February 2022;¹⁴
 - (iii) First Co-Design Workshop in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Project “WBC-RRI.net Embedding Responsible Research and Innovation in Western Balkan Countries”¹⁵, jointly with Co-PLAN (Albania), Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania (Kune-Vain-Tale 13 April 2022);
 - (iv) Second Co-Design Workshop in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Project “WBC-RRI.net Embedding Responsible Research and Innovation in Western Balkan Countries”, jointly with Co-PLAN (Albania), Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania and the Regional Agency for the Protected Areas (Kune-Vain-Tale 27 April 2022);
 - (v) Participated in the coordination meeting “Horizon Europe Project: GREENFORCE – fostering research excellence for green transition in Western Balkans”, organized jointly by Co-PLAN (Albania), Polis University (Albania), POLITO (Italy), Center for Economic Analysis (Northern Macedonia) and Nordregio (Sweden) Global Environment Facility (GEF) - Serbia¹⁶ (Brussels, 25 May 2022);
 - (vi) Participated in the online Workshop of the Western Balkans Network on Territorial Governance, organized jointly by Co-PLAN (Albania), Polis University (Albania), POLITO (Italy) Center for Economic Analysis (Northern Macedonia) and Nordregio (Sweden) GEF-Serbia (26 and 27 May 2022);

¹² www.cityresilience.com

¹³ <https://www.agcc.co.uk/files/SUA-2022-Full-Report-24May2022.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://ombresearchseries.org/2022/02/01/international-workshop-2022-planning-cities-for-the-post-pandemic-crisis-era/>.

¹⁵ <https://wbc-rri.net/event-review-1st-co-design-workshop-in-kune-vain-tale-lagoon/>.

¹⁶ <https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/organization>; <https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/country-profiles/serbia>.

- (vii) Organised a training workshop on “Smart Sustainable City Tirana” in cooperation with the Centre of Excellence in Spain (Tirana, 26 September to 8 October 2022).
- (b) The Centre of Excellence in Canada held/contributed to in the following events:
- (i) A roundtable on Cross-systems Prevention Approaches to Youth Homelessness during the FEANTSA Policy Conference 2022: Towards a Vision for Ending Homelessness (Dublin, 2 and 3 June 2022);
- (ii) Presented its work in support of the Geneva UN Charter at the special event on Affordable Housing and Ending Homelessness, co-organized by UN-Habitat and Madagascar as part of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, held in New York on 27 April 2022.
- (c) The Centre of Excellence in Italy conducted a series of webinars on “Public and Private finance for smart sustainable cities”¹⁷;
- (d) The Centre of Excellence in Norway held/contributed to the following events:
- (i) A workshop on Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Development (Trondheim, 2 and 3 June 2022);
- (ii) Lectures by Norwegian experts as part of the ECE online training workshops on VLRs in 2021 (together with the Centre of Excellence in Switzerland);
- (e) The Centre of Excellence in Spain held the following events:
- (i) Workshop and public debate on sustainability (October 2021);
- (ii) Workshop and public debate on rematerializing housing (November 2021);
- (iii) Masterclass series “On Cities”, published online¹⁸ as free of charge resource material;
- (iv) Conversation series “Future of Cities”, which are published online¹⁹ as free of charge resource materials.
- (f) The Centre of Excellence in Switzerland contributed to the following two side events to the Second Forum of Mayors: “Local Resilience to climate change and COVID-19 - No one left behind in urban resilience building”, organized jointly with Geneva Cities Hub and UN-Habitat, and “Localizing the SDGs: Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE region-experiences and good practices” (Geneva, 4 and 5 April 2022);
- (g) The Centre of Excellence in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland contributed to the following events:
- (i) Side event “#Housing2030, effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region” to the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, 6 October 2022);

¹⁷ <https://exsuf.liuc.it/exsuf/>.

¹⁸ <https://normanfosterfoundation.org/the-norman-foster-foundation-presents-on-cities-masterclass-series/>.

¹⁹ <https://normanfosterfoundation.org/the-norman-foster-foundation-presents-the-future-of-cities-conversations-series/>.

- (ii) Side event to the International Housing Festival “Climate-neutral housing - Decarbonizing the housing stock in an inclusive and affordable way” (Helsinki, 15 June 2022).
 - (h) Meetings of the network of the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence were held in January, March, June, and September 2022 to discuss progress updates and activities for the coming year.
48. To promote the work of the Geneva UN 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>).

G. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

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

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

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

- (a) Support to the Committee and WPLA in the implementation of their programmes of work;
- (b) Increased exchange of experience and best practices among local and national governments in the ECE region in the areas of affordable and energy-efficient housing, smart sustainable cities and land administration.

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

- (a) The report *Sharing Economy in the Housing Sector in the UNECE Region*;
- (b) Provided input to the Committee background document *Emerging needs of the ECE region in the areas of housing, real estate and urban development* (ECE/HBP/2022/Inf. 2);
- (c) Supported the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition in promoting the implementation of the International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles “Safe Buildings Save Lives”, endorsed by the Committee at its eighty-first session (Geneva, 6-9 October 2020).

52. The following activities related to the REM Advisory Group were organized:

- (a) Annual meeting of the REM Advisory Group (21 January 2022);
- (b) Presentation at “Scaling-up financing for Sustainable Urban Infrastructure – Experiences from the UNECE Region” (Geneva, 7 April 2022). A paper on innovative finance was presented during the meeting;
- (c) Side event to the International Housing Forum on “Sources of lack of housing affordability: Evidence from different countries” (Madrid, 17 May 2022);
- (d) Presentation at AHA Forum meeting on Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing. Panel on barriers to “Ownership and Tenure” (Madrid, 20 May 2022);

(e) Side event to the World Urban Forum (Katowice, 26-30 June 2022). “Housing challenges for Circular Cities: Socioeconomic challenges to make smart cities more sustainable”; and

(f) Presentation at the annual Conference of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) (Barcelona, 30 August – 2 September 2022). A paper on the sharing economy in the housing sector was presented during the meeting.

H. Land administration and management

53. To assist member States in improving land administration and land management, the Working Party on Land Administration promotes security of tenure and improvement of cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land registration. 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 impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the land administration was also assessed.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

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

(a) *Scenario Study on Future Land Administration* publication in English and Russian (ECE/HBP/209). The document serves as an instrument to initiate a continuous dialogue among and within national land administration authorities and to guide them in the development of long-term strategies for the sustainability of their work and services;

(b) A list of key effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on land administration;

(c) Based on the list in 56(b), the following two online courses were developed: “Guidelines for the Formalization of Informal Constructions” (ECE/HBP/196) and “Implementing the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plans for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region”.

55. The following were developed jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG):

(a) *Accelerated digitalization and the future role of land administration in the ECE region* publication;

(b) *Knowledge for Investment*” policy brief, drawing on the publication in 57(a);

(c) Two webinars to present the “Accelerated digitalization” publication and share good practices and lessons learned.

56. The following events related to land administration and management were organized:

(a) Webinar “Cadastral mapping and land registration authorities’ strategies in Europe” (3 February 2022);

(b) Online workshop “Geospatial information – advanced education and competence needs”, organized jointly with the University of Gavle (Sweden) (22 March 2022);²⁰

²⁰ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/364956>.

(c) Webinar “Benefit and Challenges of open data in land administration”, organized jointly with *Colegio de Registradores de la Propiedad, Mercantiles y de Bienes Muebles de España* (Spain) (27 April 2022);²¹

(d) Webinar “Socio-economic benefits of geospatial information”, organized jointly with FAO (19 May 2022);²²

(e) Webinar “Data Interoperability: The benefits for the Land Administration sector” (24 June 2022).

57. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work on land administration and management: the dedicated ECE website at <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

58. Following requests from the national governments of Albania and Montenegro, preparations are underway to raise the required extrabudgetary funds to conduct country profiles on housing, urban development and land management, and planning in the two countries. Pending availability of funding, the country profile for Montenegro will integrate the results of the ongoing assessment of the country’s housing system.

J. Technical cooperation activities

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

- UNDA 12th tranche project “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”, implemented in cooperation with the regional commissions of the United Nations and UN-Habitat
- UNDA “rapid response” project “Building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19”, implemented in cooperation with the regional commissions of the United Nations and UN-Habitat
- UNDA 12th tranche project “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region”, implemented by ECE in cooperation with UN-Habitat
- “Strengthening capacity for the implementation of urban-related SDGs in San Marino through the development of the City Profile on Smart Sustainable Urban Development” project, financed by the Government of San Marino
- “Post COVID-19 Recovery in Informal Settlements in the ECE Region” project, financed from the ECE Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation.

60. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine, on 24 February 2022, has caused the destruction of urban infrastructure in many towns and villages across the country. To ensure a coherent approach to reconstruction efforts, the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine elaborated a “Draft Framework Plan for the Integrated Rehabilitation of Settlements (Territories)” as a reference document for guiding local governments in developing and implementing reconstruction plans and initiatives in

²¹ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/366530>.

²² <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/367024>.

cooperation with the Ministry and with the support of international development partners. To pilot test the Draft Framework Plan, the Ministry launched a multifaceted project for reconstructing the city of Kharkiv, the second-largest city in the country. The project will serve as a blueprint for the reconstruction of other Ukrainian cities and towns. Given the thorough knowledge of ECE of housing, land management and urban development systems of Ukraine, the Ministry requested ECE to:

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

61. In response to the request of the Ministry, ECE established the UN4Kharkiv Task Force for supporting the reconstruction and long-term efforts of local and national governments to “building back better”. The Task Force brings together 12 United Nations agencies, the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine, the Kharkiv city government, and Ukrainian experts. It is being coordinated by the Forests, Land and Housing Division, working closely with other ECE divisions and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Country Team in Ukraine with funds from the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation.

K. Cooperation with other international organizations

62. The Committee secretariat cooperates with the regional commissions of the United Nations and UN-Habitat within the context of its technical cooperation activities. UN-Habitat also provided case studies to the updated Guidelines for the VLRs and is collaborating with the secretariat within the framework of the UN4Kharkiv Task Force. The secretariat also collaborates with Housing Europe within the context of the #Housing2030 initiative and with the Geneva Cities Hub in organizing the roundtable “In focus: SDG 11” as part of the annual sessions of the Committee. This roundtable provides a platform for a dialogue between the United Nations and city networks on addressing the challenges to achieving SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” and other urban-related SDGs.

63. 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.

II. Major activities planned for 2023

64. The Committee will continue to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the housing, urban and land-related Sustainable Development Goals, 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”.

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

A. Affordable, accessible, adequate and healthy housing with focus on needs of women and youth

66. The Committee will continue its engagement in the #Housing2030 initiative. As part of the Initiative and in cooperation with its partners, Housing Europe and UN-Habitat, it will develop thematic studies, organize regional and subregional policy workshops and capacity building events on #Housing2030 topics: (a) housing governance and regulation; (b) access to finance and funding; (c) access and availability of land for housing construction; and (d) climate-neutral housing construction and renovation.

67. The Committee will also continue collecting experiences and best practices at national and local levels and disseminate those through the #Housing2030 online platform at www.housing2030.org.

68. 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 2023, subject to availability of extrabudgetary financial resources, the Committee will work on Country Profiles for Albania and Montenegro.

69. The #Housing 2030 experts will be engaged in the Housing working group of the National Recovery Plan Council of Ukraine.

70. The Committee will work on supporting the implementation the Regional Action Plan through workshops, training events and publications. Countries will be invited to report on implementing the Regional Action Plan on a regular basis during the annual sessions of the Committee.

71. The Committee will work with the network of Charter Centres of Excellence to implement the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

72. Implementation of the activities listed under heading A is expected to support building the capacity of national and local authorities for developing and implementing policies for ensuring affordable housing.

73. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work on housing: #Housing2030 online platform at www.housing2030.org; the ECE Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence website (<https://unece.org/housing/charter>), podcasts, videos, thematic articles, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

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

1. Implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Informal Settlements

74. The COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/214) provides a comprehensive list of goals, targets and actions to help local and national governments not only mitigate and/or prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic but also address the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements.

75. The Recovery Action Plan will be further disseminated to relevant stakeholders through the organization of at least two subregional workshops and local online trainings in the pilot cities, in addition to preparing policy briefs on experiences in implementing the Plan.

2. Support efforts of local governments across the Economic Commission for Europe region in developing and implementing plans for sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery

76. Following the finalization of the UNDA Rapid Response project “Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19”, the work will focus on continuing support to the beneficiary cities, including Bishkek, Kharkiv and Tirana. This includes helping the three cities scale up on achieved results through capacity-building and mobilise the required financial resources for implementing policies and initiatives for sustainable post-COVID-19 urban economic recovery and resilience.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

77. Implementation of the activities listed under heading B 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 for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements.

78. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work on post-COVID-19 urban resilience and on informal settlements: videos, thematic articles, podcasts, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

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

1. Pilot testing the updated Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region

79. The updated VLRs are intended to help local governments track progress towards the achievement of the SDGs; strengthen synergies between local, national and global level policies and initiatives; increase local ownership of SDGs; and improve the engagement of local governments in the preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and other national processes for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

80. Following the expected endorsement by the Committee of the updated ECE Guidelines for the development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/2022/6), the Committee will pilot test the guidelines in the interested cities, subject to availability of funding. In cooperation with the Centres of Excellence, it will also work to further develop a detailed methodology for the implementation of the updated Guidelines.

2. Promoting evidence-based policies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the city level and implementation of the U4SSC programme

81. The Committee will continue its activities to promote evidence-based housing and urban development policies at the local and national levels through the evaluation of cities' performance using the KPIs for SSC, preparation of City Profiles based on the evaluation, and capacity-building activities to support the cities to become smart and sustainable.

3. Innovative financing for urban infrastructure, including housing

82. The *Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities* and the *U4SSC Compendium of Practices on Innovative Financing* publications will be adapted for use as training materials to provide support to city governments in the ECE region in finding investments for their urban development projects. Further, ECE will establish the Project Catalyst platform to help cities develop bankable project proposals.

Activity impacts and dissemination of results

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

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

D. Activities of the Geneva UN Charter Centres for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities

85. Concerning the network of Centres of Excellence, the secretariat will continue implementing the recommendations of the evaluation conducted in 2019 to increase overall effectiveness and efficiency of operations of the Centres. This will include strengthening the networking between the Centres by further developing the shared online space for exchange of information and organizing biannual meetings (online or in-person) and fostering the exchange of best practices between the Centres. In addition, the secretariat plans to discuss and identify opportunities for joint fundraising with the Centres of Excellence.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

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

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

E. Promoting multilevel governance through the ECE Forum of Mayors

88. The 112th session of EXCOM in December 2020 decided to evaluate the Forum and submit the results for the consideration of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at its 2022 session as well as EXCOM. The results of the evaluation are to provide the basis for deliberations on the objectives, format and frequency of the Forum, if extended beyond 2022 (ECE/EX/2020/L.16).

89. To feed into the evaluation, recommendations were developed by mayors during informal briefings on 15 February, 11 March and 28 March 2022. They were informally approved at the Second Forum of Mayors and are transmitted to the Committee for its consideration during its current 83rd session (ECE/HBP/2022/1).

90. Should the Forum of Mayors be extended further, and depending on the format agreed, the secretariat will organize a third event in 2023, when and how decided by EXCOM.

F. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

91. The mandate and the terms of reference of the REM Advisory Group were extended until end of 2022 pursuant to the EXCOM decision ECE/EX2020/L.15 of December 2020.

92. At its meeting, on 13 January 2022, the Committee Bureau discussed the activities of the Advisory Group and recommended the extension of its mandate until end of 2024. The revised terms of reference is provided in document ECE/HBP/2022/7.

93. The REM Advisory Group also developed a draft programme of work for the period 2023-2024. The draft was discussed with the Bureau of the Committee and the Bureau agreed on its content, which is provided in document ECE/HBP/2022/8.

94. The Committee is invited to endorse the revised terms of reference of the REM Advisory Group until end of 2024 and its programme of work for the period 2023-2024 and recommend to EXCOM to approve both documents.

F. Land administration and management

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

96. Dissemination tools will be developed to train and assist national and local authorities in the implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE region.

97. The thirteenth Session of WPLA will be held on 4 and 5 April 2023 in Geneva.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

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

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

III. Resources for the implementation of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management activities in 2023

100. Many of the activities mentioned, especially those involving the provision of technical assistance to countries, are not covered by funds of the ECE Regular Budget. Some of the

planned and listed activities will be implemented with funds from the ECE Regular Budget, the UNDA, and the Regional Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC). Some extrabudgetary projects in 2022-2023 were funded by the Governments of San Marino, Slovenia, Switzerland and the Russian Federation.

101. Additional extrabudgetary funds will be required for the implementation of activities under the 2023 Programme of Work of the Committee.

102. 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. Subject to the availability of resources, the Unit will also comprise an additional regular budget staff - P4 Regional Advisor.
