

## **Economic Commission for Europe**

### **Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management**

#### **Eighty-third session**

Geneva, 4-5 April 2022 (Part I); and San Marino, 3-6 October 2022 (Part II)

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

#### **Second Forum of Mayors**

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

#### **Report on the outcomes of the second Forum of Mayors and related recommendations**

### **Evaluation of the UNECE Forum of Mayors Final Report, July 2022\***

#### **Note by the secretariat**

##### *Summary*

At its 112<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) mandated the Steering Committee of the Forum of Mayors to evaluate the 2020 session of the Forum and submit the results for the consideration of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) at its eighty-third session (2022). The results of the evaluation are to provide the basis for the session's deliberations on the objectives, format and frequency of the Forum, if extended beyond 2022, with a view to submitting a proposal on the future of the Forum for endorsement by EXCOM in 2022 (ECE/EX/2020/L.16).

This document contains the entire evaluation report for information. The main conclusions and recommendations emerging from the evaluation is contained in document ECE/HBP/2022/4.

---

\* Report prepared by Raul Guerrero, Independent Evaluator

# Table of Contents

<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1 PURPOSE, PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2 APPROACH</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.3 METHODS AND TOOLS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4 LIMITATIONS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>2. FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>2.1 RELEVANCE</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>2.2 EFFICIENCY AND COHERENCE</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>2.3 EFFECTIVENESS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>2.4 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>3. MAIN CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>4. RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<i>ANNEX I. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE</i> .....	<b>40</b>
<i>ANNEX II. FUTURE SCENARIO</i> .....	<b>46</b>
<i>ANNEX III. CONSULTED DOCUMENTS</i> .....	<b>48</b>
<i>ANNEX IV. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES</i> .....	<b>49</b>
<i>ANNEX V. LIST OF INTERVIEWS</i> .....	<b>51</b>
<i>ANNEX VI. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE</i> .....	<b>52</b>
<i>ANNEX VII. MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE</i> .....	<b>57</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation was mandated by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) to decide whether to extend the Forum of Mayors beyond 2022 as well as to agree on its objectives, format and frequency.

The results of the evaluation will be considered by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) at its 83rd session and by EXCOM during 2022.

The following events were included in the scope of the evaluation: Day of Cities (8 April 2019), the first Forum of Mayors (6 October 2020) and the second Forum of Mayors (4-5 April 2022).

An Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) oversaw the evaluation process to reinforce its impartiality. The findings and results of the evaluation were based on sound evidence and analysis by triangulating the information where possible.

The evaluation relied on complementary methods and sources to answer the evaluation questions: document review, interviews with key informants and an electronic survey of participants in the events.

### [Main conclusions](#)

#### *Relevance*

The role of mayors and cities as a positive and growing force on the global stage was broadly acknowledged. It is necessary for UNECE to engage with cities to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of its work.

Mandated by an intergovernmental body, the Forum has emerged as a broad and valued platform to engage ECE mayors and member States in practical

discussions on sustainable urban development in the region.

#### *Efficiency and coherence*

Although the Forum has its own programme and agenda and has been operating independently from other UNECE bodies, it being de facto part of CUDHLM has ensured its relevance and effectiveness. The link with the Committee – a formal body that allows bringing the output of the Forum into the official discussions – is very valuable.

The Forum should be a crucial instrument for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Steering Committee, established to coordinate the preparatory work and organization of the Forum, is currently providing advice but without the framework of agreed terms of reference. There is a need to further clarify its relationship with both member States and the secretariat.

UNECE provided efficient support through regular budget staff. Although no personnel were used exclusively for the Forum, the outreach was positive and the feedback very good. Over 92 per cent of the stakeholders approached as part of this evaluation assessed the organization of the events as satisfactory and 85 per cent rated the support provided by the secretariat as satisfactory.

The secretariat has recently been strengthened with a fully dedicated Regional Advisor position and a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) funded by Italy at the P2 level. This should contribute to improving cross-collaboration with other divisions as well as the quality of services of UNECE in general.

#### *Effectiveness*

The current process of selecting the participating cities fully corresponds to the intergovernmental nature of UNECE. The limit of one city per country is a pragmatic approach to maximize cost-effectiveness.

The Forum is a “work in progress” with immense opportunities to build up a record of action beyond sharing experiences. It is necessary to keep the momentum and to provide a response to a quickly evolving context by offering a neutral platform to bring stakeholders together.

Geneva offers a “neutral place” to host the Forum that minimizes any selection problems. In addition, it facilitates the participation of member States, ensures economies of scale (including the contribution of the Geneva Cities Hub) and strengthens the character of the Forum and connection with United Nations processes (stressing mayors as another layer of diplomacy).

### *Impact and sustainability*

Between 85 and 100 per cent of the stakeholders believed that the Forum satisfactorily contributed to peer learning, the exchange of knowledge and increased understanding by urban authorities of successful examples of transitioning towards smart sustainable cities. Stakeholders broadly highlighted that more space for informal exchange should be planned.

Involving participating cities in the substantial preparation of the meetings proved an excellent strategy to strengthen ownership and ensure an active engagement of local governments on issues as well as practical discussions on sustainable urban development at the regional and international levels.

The Forum has increased its relevance by providing a venue for deliberations and initiatives by UNECE mayors. Allowing the participants to discuss political matters contributed to strengthening ownership

and visibility in 2022. The secretariat demonstrated excellent skills in resolving conflict and managing difficult situations that could have jeopardized the event.

While there is broad agreement that the Forum should be kept as a regional initiative, the potential of the Forum extends far beyond the UNECE region, as its outcomes will contribute to the global vision of the future of cities. Most stakeholders appreciated the participation of mayors from outside the UNECE region. Many highlighted that the Forum is also valuable for UNECE and non-UNECE member States and that clear criteria to invite them should be defined.

Having the well-known architect Norman Foster opening both the 2020 and 2022 Forums and his involvement in the Forum organization – *de facto* acting as its patron – provided huge visibility to the events and the participation of urban stakeholders beyond the usual UNECE constituency.

### Recommendations

1. Formally establish the Forum of Mayors. It represents an innovative initiative that (i) responds to the role of mayors and cities as a positive and growing force on the global stage; and (ii) ensures the relevance and effectiveness of UNECE.
2. Further strengthen the connection of the Forum with the work of CUDHLM by attaching it to the annual sessions of the Committee and finding a complementary narrative but keeping the Forum's own programme and agenda.
3. Keeping the tradition of providing a report to inform the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) is a good practice and could be maintained.
4. Have informal meetings with the representatives of municipalities to

define the theme of the Forum's meetings. Consider organizing the presentations specifically around progress towards the SDGs.

5. Provide more information at the Forum on impact measurement to strengthen the role of the Forum as a crucial instrument to keep mayors and cities focused on the 2030 Agenda by, for example, presenting existing UNECE tools for sustainable urban development, measuring progress toward smart sustainable cities, developing urban SDG strategies, trade-offs, implementation, monitoring, participation, etc.
6. Consider hiring one dedicated staff to strengthen the secretariat. In this respect, the Government of Italy has recently provided support through a JPO at the P2 level to help with the Forum. If the experience proves successful, it should be considered to make this position a regular budget one.
7. Strengthen the connection with the work of other UNECE subprogrammes and divisions. The above-mentioned JPO position, together with the recently established fully dedicated Regional Advisor position, should contribute to improve cross-collaboration with other divisions and the quality of UNECE services.
8. Develop terms of reference that clearly define the role and mandate of the Steering Committee as a crucial instrument for providing an "institutional structure" for the Forum and guiding its activities. The terms of reference would also further clarify the relationship of the Forum with both member States and the secretariat.
9. Strengthen the current city selection system that fully corresponds with the intergovernmental nature of UNECE. Further develop objective selection criteria to ensure alignment with the

work of CUDHLM and maximize impact. The limit of one city per country is a pragmatic approach. In the future, an increased number could be considered if sufficient resources are available. In any case, the selection should allow to mix new with previous participants.

10. Organize the Forum on an annual basis, at least until it becomes a well-known event and frequency could be then reconsidered. The Forum is a work in progress with immense opportunities to build up a record of action beyond sharing experiences. A yearly event would allow the Forum to "keep the momentum" and provide a response to a quickly evolving context by offering a neutral platform to bring stakeholders together.
11. Organize the Forum two or three times in Geneva and then consider alternating every other year. This would minimize any selection problems, facilitate participation, ensure economies of scale, strengthen the Forum's character and connection with United Nations processes and stress mayors as another layer of diplomacy.
12. Allow space to discuss political matters that could happen on the sides of the Forum (e.g., non-official declarations or discussions, side events, etc.), but with consideration to include more political discussions and outcome in the formal session (together with the presentations with images). It is necessary to keep the relevance of the initiative by providing a venue for mayors' deliberations and initiatives. This will also strengthen ownership and visibility.
13. Consider including a "global segment" in the Forum's future sessions so as to contribute to the global vision of the future of cities. The selection of participants should be based on clear criteria to ensure that their

engagement benefits all parties, including the other Regional Commissions of the United Nations.

14. Consider formalizing the position of "Patron" of the Forum to increase its visibility and the participation of urban stakeholders beyond the usual UNECE constituency.

# 1. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Purpose, principles and scope

1. In line with the decision of the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) of December 2022 (ECE/EX/2020/L.16), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) launched an evaluation of the Forum of Mayors to decide whether to extend it beyond 2022 as well as to agree on its objectives, format and frequency. The results of the evaluation will be considered by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) at its 83<sup>rd</sup> session<sup>1</sup> and by EXCOM during 2022.
2. The evaluation findings and results were based on sound evidence and analysis and the following events were included in the scope of the evaluation: Day of Cities (8 April 2019),<sup>2</sup> the first Forum of Mayors (6 October 2020)<sup>3</sup> and the second Forum of Mayors (4-5 April 2022).<sup>4</sup> The information was triangulated as far as possible and analysis leading to evaluative results was clearly spelled out.
3. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNECE Evaluation Policy<sup>5</sup> and in compliance with the revised gender-related norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.<sup>6</sup> Human rights and gender equality was integrated during all stages of the evaluation, including assessing how gender was considered in the organization of the Forum of Mayors. Anonymity and confidentiality were protected throughout the evaluation process.

## 1.2 APPROACH

4. As foreseen in the terms of reference, the evaluation was guided by the objectives, indicators of achievement and means of verification established in the project documents (see annex I). It was also guided by the Secretariat's Note, developed with mayor's offices and other stakeholders, on the Second Forum of Mayors (Background and Recommendations) that proposed five points for the future of the Forum (see annex II): (i) upgrade the format of the Forum to a recurrent event; (ii) assign a precise focus for the Forum's discussions; (iii) revise the selection criteria and process/procedure for participating cities; (iv) strengthen the Forum's planning and decision making; and (iv) establish an online platform for the Forum
5. The evaluation was organized around six evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, coherence and impact) and 22 specific questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> The eighty-third session will take place in October 2022 in San Marino. For further details, see <https://unece.org/info/events/event/364158>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/forum-of-mayors-2019>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/forum-of-mayors-2020>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/second-forum-mayors-2022>.

<sup>5</sup> [https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/OPEN\\_UNECE/03\\_Evaluation\\_and\\_Audit/UNECE\\_Evaluation\\_Policy\\_October\\_2014.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/OPEN_UNECE/03_Evaluation_and_Audit/UNECE_Evaluation_Policy_October_2014.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>.

**Table 1. Key evaluation criteria and specific questions**

<b>RELEVANCE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How relevant have the Fora been to the Programme of Work of component (a) of subprogramme 8?</li> <li>2. How relevant have been the Fora to reflect issues of particular interest to the region and enhance sub regional cooperation?</li> <li>3. How relevant have the Fora been to the wider UN priorities, inter alia, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing?</li> <li>4. To what extent have the Fora contributed to gender equality, disability inclusion and to an increased focus towards the most vulnerable?</li> </ol>
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To what extent did the organization of the Fora support an efficient use of resources in ECE?</li> <li>6. Have appropriate mechanisms and a formal structure been established to link the Fora to the Committee on Urban Development and other Committees? (to approve a declaration or to promote the implementation of recommendations and decisions taken at the Fora)</li> <li>7. How efficient was the support provided by ECE regular budget funded staff to organize these events?</li> </ol>
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. How effective were the successive formats to deliver agreed objectives? What were the final outputs delivered?</li> <li>9. Have the Forums provided an effective platform for the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular Mayors and cities?</li> <li>10. To what extent have the Fora allowed Mayors participating in the Committee intergovernmental process in their own right? (action oriented experiment to link global-national-local diplomacy)</li> <li>11. How effective was the support of the Secretariat and Steering Committee to the Fora?</li> </ol>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Has the Forum evolved to take into account the lessons derived from previous Fora?</li> <li>13. How sustainable is it for the Housing Unit to organize a recurrent Forum of Mayors, vis-à-vis the other deliverables included in its Programme of Work?</li> <li>14. Which frequency appears the most sustainable for the Forum?</li> </ol>
<b>COHERENCE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. How coherent was the cross-collaboration between ECE subprogrammes during the Fora? What lessons can be learned?</li> <li>16. How coherent were the collaboration and partnerships with UN system and other stakeholders?</li> <li>17. Has the coherence of the Forum been enhanced in 2022, following its affiliation with RFSD, in addition to CUDHLM? Would a direct link with the Commission be a coherent choice?</li> <li>18. How coherent is the choice of Geneva to host the Forum? Would it be coherent to envisage hosting by ECE member States outside of Geneva?</li> </ol>
<b>IMPACT</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. How impactful have the Fora been in term of participation and visibility? What lessons can be learned? What were the Forum impacts on the visibility and role of UNECE as a whole?</li> <li>20. How have the Fora contributed to more direct engagement of local governments on issues such as housing, urban and land governance at the regional and international levels?</li> <li>21. Has the Forum of Mayors emerged as a broad and valued platform to engage Mayors and member States on practical discussions on sustainable urban development in the ECE region?</li> </ol>



22. What has been the impact of the participation of Mayors from other regions in 2022? Would there be a significant impact if a global segment is included in the Forum?

6. From answers to these questions, the evaluation covered many key issues such as the type of participants; interest in hosting by member States; visibility of the event and media impact; outputs; follow-up activities initiated by mayors; mandates and affiliation; impact on the programme of work of CUDHLM; added value of UNECE through the Nexuses; cooperation with other relevant subprogrammes, etc. Factors and processes affecting performance and cross-cutting issues were addressed throughout the evaluation criteria as appropriate.

### 1.3 METHODS AND TOOLS

7. In line with the terms of reference, an Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) oversaw the process to reinforce the impartiality of the evaluation.<sup>7</sup> The evaluation approach was discussed in an initial meeting with the IEC members (9 March 2022)<sup>8</sup> and formally approved in an inception report.
8. The evaluation relied on complementary methods and sources: document review, interviews with key informants and an online survey of participants in the events. The secondary sources included (i) mandates and terms of reference of UNECE and relevant subsidiary bodies; (ii) EXCOM and CUDHLM decisions, formal and informal documents; (iii) recommendations developed by mayors and their offices and contained in document ECE/HBP/2022/1;<sup>9</sup> (iv) strategic and procedural documents; (v) products of the three events; etc. See the list of documents in annex III.
9. Out of a selected sample of 40, a total of 23 key informants were interviewed (see the interview guidelines in annex IV)<sup>10</sup> consisting of members of the secretariat, UNECE management and staff, representatives of member States (EXCOM delegations), mayors (participants in the events), United Nations entities and other partner organizations (see the full list of interviewees in annex V). The interviewees were 54 per cent men and 46 per cent women.

**Table 2. Interviews**

	<i>Number (Percentage)</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
National government representatives	7 (30%)	3 (43%)	5 (57%)
Mayors / city representatives	5 (22%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)

<sup>7</sup> 1. The IEC comprised of three members: Chair of the Steering Committee (SC) of the Forum of Mayors, Director of the Forests, Land and Housing Division (FLHD) and the Programme Officer in charge of evaluations, Programme Management Unit (PMU).

<sup>8</sup> Participants: Mr. Martin Zbinden (SC Co-Chair, Switzerland), Ms. Paola Deda (Director, FLHD), Ms. Chiara Giamberardini (Programme Officer in charge of evaluations, PMU) and Mr. Raul Guerrero (Evaluator).

<sup>9</sup> <https://unece.org/isu/documents/2022/05/session-documents/second-forum-mayors-background-and-recommendations>

<sup>10</sup> The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, open and interactive way. The questions were used as a guide rather than administered as a structured questionnaire. The sub-questions were used as possible prompts, rather than as comprehensive lists of questions to be asked.

	Number (Percentage)		
	Total	Female	Male
UNECE secretariat	3 (13%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
Other United Nations organizations	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Other organizations	5 (22%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
Total	23 (100.0%)	10 (43%)	13 (57%)

10. An online survey was administered in English to the 1,026 participants in the Day of Cities (2019) and in the two Forums of Mayors (2020 and 2022).<sup>11</sup> See the survey questionnaire in annex VI.
11. Although the intention was not to achieve statistically representative results but to gather the opinion of a significant number of stakeholders, the response rate was very low. Despite several reminders and two extensions of the deadline for submission, only 13 responses were received during the five-week period from 9 May – 3 June (69 per cent were men and 31 per cent were women). Respondents included representatives from cities (31 per cent) and member States (23 per cent) as well as other stakeholders (46 per cent) such as academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), city networks, professional bodies, etc.
12. Over 61 per cent of the respondents declared that their main engagement with the Forum of Mayors was as participant in the events. The 69 per cent of the respondents had participated in the first edition of the Forum (2020), 61 per cent in the second edition (2022) and 54 per cent in the Day of Cities (2019). Over 62 per cent of the respondents attended the events in person, 38 per cent participated online and 38 per cent were speakers.
13. The low number of responses in the survey seems to be compensated by the high number of participants in the preparation of the recommendations from mayors (ECE/HBP/2022/1) reflecting opinions, views and suggestions of stakeholders on future Forum of Mayors. Those recommendations are reflected in this evaluation, as appropriate.

#### 1.4 LIMITATIONS

14. The methodology was envisaged to minimize potential biases by triangulating information, that is, validating inputs and data from different sources. Nevertheless, the evaluation did not aim to be exhaustive in its description of achieved results and several constraints need be acknowledged and considered at the same time as the evaluation findings and conclusions:
- The low response rate to the survey reduced its representativeness.
  - Self-selection of interviewees might have introduced a positive bias.
  - Regional developments (war in Ukraine) might have also affected the evaluation results (politicization of the Forum).

<sup>11</sup> This figure does not correspond to single participants as some of them participated in more than one event and are counted more than once.

- The lack of a comprehensive theory of change and solid outcome indicators was a limitation for a robust contribution analysis.

## 2. FINDINGS

### 2.1 RELEVANCE

#### *Wider United Nations priorities*

15. The greatest global challenges defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, must be implemented at territorial and local level where citizens can be part of the change.<sup>12</sup> The New Urban Agenda recognized sustainable urban development as a critical step for realizing sustainable development in an integrated and coordinated manner at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, with the participation of all relevant actors.<sup>13</sup>
16. The role of mayors and cities as a positive and growing force on the global stage has been broadly acknowledged. At the launch of the Decade of Action and the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, the Secretary-General pledged for a United Nations based on an inclusive, networked multilateralism that links national governments, civil society, businesses and cities with global and regional organizations, trading blocs and financial institutions.
17. The New Urban Agenda recognizes the need to enable policy frameworks at the national, subnational and local levels, integrated by participatory planning and management of urban spatial development and effective means of implementation, complemented by international cooperation as well as efforts in capacity development, including the sharing of best practices, policies and programmes among Governments at all levels. The need to improve United Nations system-wide coordination and coherence in the area of sustainable urban development was also emphasized.
18. The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments<sup>14</sup> confirmed the willingness of the local and regional governments to be a part of the future of the multilateral system as drivers of global policies shaping actions and decisions. The Forum responds to the wish of municipalities by offering a platform to connect multilateral national diplomacy with multilateral city diplomacy.
19. Since 2008, cities have gained growing responsibility for implementation as they are more agile to innovate and respond to crises. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the key role of local and regional governments to achieve sustainable development. Cities were at the forefront in efforts to overcome unprecedented and universal challenges being allies of other spheres of government and the scientific community, and as global actors with important

---

<sup>12</sup> Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015). Available at <https://undocs.org/A/res/70/1>.

<sup>13</sup> New Urban Agenda (2016). Available at <https://undocs.org/A/res/71/256>.

<sup>14</sup> The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments is a coordination and consultation mechanism that brings together the major international networks of local governments. It was set up in 2013 to bring the perspectives of local and regional governments to the SDGs, climate change agenda and New Urban Agenda. For further details, see <https://www.global-taskforce.org>.

transformational and convening power. It is necessary for the United Nations to engage with cities to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of its work.

#### *UNECE mandate*

20. As one of the five United Nations regional commissions set up by ECOSOC, UNECE contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations through the regional implementation of outcomes of global conferences and summits to promote pan-European economic integration.<sup>15</sup> In cooperation with other global players and key stakeholders, UNECE gives focus to the global mandates of the United Nations in the economic field and sets out norms, standards and conventions to facilitate international cooperation within and outside the region.
21. In particular, UNECE facilitates economic integration and cooperation among its 56 member States in Europe, North America and Asia and promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity through:
  - Policy dialogue
  - Negotiation of international legal instruments
  - Development of regulations and norms
  - Exchange and application of best practices as well as economic and technical expertise
  - Technical cooperation for countries with economies in transition.
22. The programme budget for 2023 recognizes the strategic objective of UNECE - to promote regional cooperation and integration as a means of achieving sustainable development in the region.<sup>16</sup> This should be achieved by implementing eight subprogrammes whose objectives are defined as follows:
  - (i) Improve environmental governance and performance for safeguarding the environment and health.
  - (ii) Advance a regionally and globally sustainable inland transport (road, rail, inland waterway and inter-modality) system by making it safer, cleaner, more efficient and more affordable, both for freight transport and people's mobility.
  - (iii) Advance official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards achieving the SDGs and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the UNECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians.
  - (iv) Strengthen policies on innovation, competitiveness and public-private partnerships in the UNECE region.
  - (v) Improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the region.

---

<sup>15</sup> UNECE was set up in 1947 by ECOSOC. It is one of the five United Nations regional commissions. For more information on UNECE, see <https://unece.org>.

<sup>16</sup> See document A/77/6 Sect.20 available at: [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/PPB%202023\\_Sect%2020\\_ECE.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/PPB%202023_Sect%2020_ECE.pdf)

- (vi) Strengthen trade facilitation and electronic business, regulatory cooperation and standardization policies, agricultural quality standards and trade-related economic cooperation in the UNECE region and beyond.
  - (vii) Strengthen the sustainable management of forests and enhance the contribution of forests and forest products to sustainable development in the UNECE region.
  - (viii) Strengthen member State-owned programmes and policies promoting decent, adequate, affordable, energy-efficient and healthy housing for all, smart sustainable cities, sustainable urban development and land management, and to advance evidence-based population and social cohesion policies.
23. The objective of component (a) of the UNECE subprogramme 8 for the biennium 2018-2019 was: “to improve housing, urban and land governance, and to promote the evidence-based formulation and implementation of sustainable housing, land, ... policies in the region”.<sup>17</sup>
24. During the biennium mentioned, UNECE recognized the increased role of cities in the global economy<sup>18</sup> by enhancing the focus of its activities and, in particular, the activities of the renamed intergovernmental Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) to reflect the comprehensive focus of the subprogramme on urban development issues.<sup>19</sup> The Committee is the only intergovernmental body addressing the housing and urban development challenges of the region and the highest policymaking body of UNECE in housing, urban development and land management.<sup>20</sup>
25. Under the umbrella of CUDHLM, the activities of the subprogramme were further aligned with two central mandates, that is, the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. In addition, the work of CUDHLM is based on the principles agreed in the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing (2015),<sup>21</sup> the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development (2017)<sup>22</sup> and on the definition of smart sustainable cities adopted by the United Nations global initiative United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC).<sup>23</sup>
26. UNECE is actively involved in supporting cities and human settlements and promoting urban sustainability, resilience and competitiveness through its Nexus

---

<sup>17</sup> A/71/6/REV.1

<sup>18</sup> Tackling environmental and social challenges in cities becomes crucial with 55 per cent of the world population currently living in urban areas and expected at 68 per cent by 2050.

<sup>19</sup> The former Committee on Housing and Land Management was renamed further to the Committee on Urban Development, housing and Land Management (E/RES/2019/34 of 31 July 2019). By adopting this decision, the UNECE Commission recognized the role and tasks of the Committee in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, its SDGs and, in particular, SDG 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” as well as the New Urban Agenda and other agreements. The UNECE Commission also recognized the important role of this Committee in the implementation of sustainable urban development in the UNECE region.

<sup>20</sup> For further details, see <https://unece.org/housing/committee>.

<sup>21</sup> For details, see <https://unece.org/housing/charter>.

<sup>22</sup> For details, see

[https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/sessions/docs2017/ECE\\_HBP\\_2017\\_1\\_ENG\\_cover.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/sessions/docs2017/ECE_HBP_2017_1_ENG_cover.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> The U4SSC initiative was launched by UNECE together with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). For further details, see <https://u4ssc.itu.int>.

on Smart Sustainable Cities for All Ages.<sup>24</sup> Building on SDG11, this nexus area addresses several urban development challenges:

- UNECE programme of work on housing promotes the exchange of best practices and principles of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing through its centres of excellence,<sup>25</sup> reflecting the belief of member States that sustainable, affordable, and adequate housing is central to healthy and prosperous populations.
  - Key Performance Indicators developed under the U4SSC initiative are used by many cities across the world to measure their progress towards becoming smarter and more sustainable.
  - The UNECE Working Party on Land Administration acts as an international neutral platform for the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to land administration and management, reflecting the importance of securing land rights to make cities and human settlements inclusive, resilient and sustainable.
27. The Nexus on Sustainable Mobility and Smart Connectivity could also be linked to these efforts through several inter-connections that include: harmonizing processes and regulations; developing standards for electronic data exchanges (to improve the availability and quality of environmental information or increase the efficiency of waste management); improving traceability of products coming into cities; providing accessible, affordable, safe, secure and environmentally friendly mobility; fostering innovation; etc.
28. While the linkages with the above-mentioned two Nexuses are evident, the nexus approach remains rather theoretical with little operationalization.
29. Finally, UNECE recognizes the key role that the private sector could play in delivering public services and urban infrastructure needed for the SDGs in the challenging context of cities' shrinking budgets. UNECE assists governments, including at local level, to improve their public-private partnerships (PPP) environment through capacity-building and their PPP standards on transport, renewable energy, water and sanitation, etc.

#### *Interest to the region and subregional cooperation*

30. All interviewees agreed that the Forum of Mayors fully reflected crucial issues of particular interest to the region to enhance cooperation by “connecting the work/policies at national level with the needs/implementation at local level.” It was broadly agreed that the Forum of Mayors has emerged as a broad and valued

---

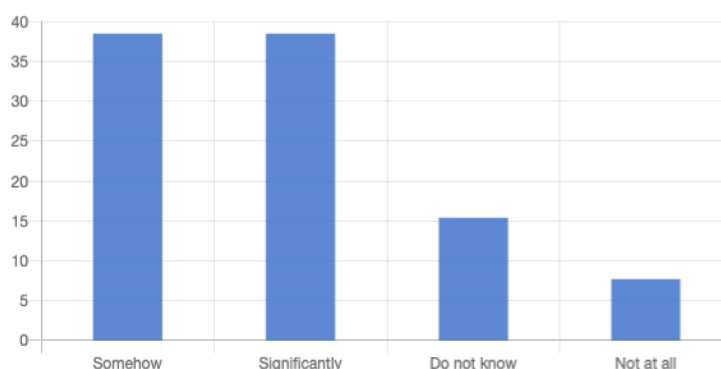
<sup>24</sup> Since 2018, the experience of UNECE has been strengthened with the nexus approach, which involves pooling expertise and knowledge across the different subprogrammes with the aim of bolstering impact. UNECE identified the nexus on sustainable and smart cities as one of the four high-impact areas. The other areas focus on sustainable use of natural resources; sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; and measuring and monitoring progress towards the SDGs. See Informal Document No. 2018/12 presented to EXCOM at its 98<sup>th</sup> meeting on 18 May 2018 ([https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2018/98EXCOM-18-May/ECE\\_EX\\_2018\\_12\\_Item\\_6\\_Alignment.pdf](https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2018/98EXCOM-18-May/ECE_EX_2018_12_Item_6_Alignment.pdf)).

<sup>25</sup> Centres of Excellence are currently hosted in Geneva (Switzerland), Glasgow (United Kingdom), Madrid (Spain), Tallinn (Estonia), Tirana (Albania), Toronto (Canada) and Trondheim (Norway).

platform to engage mayors and member States on practical discussions on sustainable urban development in the UNECE region.

31. In contrast with other initiatives to engage cities, the Forum was mandated by an intergovernmental body (see section 3.2). Many country delegations expressed their satisfaction with the Forum and valued its contribution to United Nations processes. Despite being young, the Forum added an additional layer of diplomacy. It was broadly confirmed that it was the “first multilateral initiative involving cities in such a formal level” and that it “gave voice to cities in the United Nations/global system.” One interviewee referred to the role played by cities as “advisors in intergovernmental processes.”
32. Although not in a very systematic way, an effort was made to bring attention to the needs of the most vulnerable by including issues related to gender equality, disability inclusion, migration, etc. into the different United Nations agendas and events such as “no one left behind in urban resilience building” (2022), “shelter for women victims of violence & their children” (2021), “providing affordable, healthy housing, infrastructure and basic services for vulnerable populations” (2019).
33. According to 77 per cent of the survey respondents, the Forum contributed to gender equality, disability inclusion and to an increased focus towards the most vulnerable. Less than 8 per cent thought that it did not. As put by one interviewee, “the Forum enabled mayors to stress global peace, democracy, respect for human rights and territorial integrity as essential conditions for sustainable development.”

**Graph 1.** Has the Forum of Mayors addressed gender issues and specific needs of the most vulnerable?



## 2.2 EFFICIENCY AND COHERENCE

### *Linkages with CUDHLM and other Committees*

34. At its 100<sup>th</sup> meeting, on 21 September 2018, the EXCOM invited member States to facilitate high level attendance to the 2019 Commission Session, including participation of cities to showcase good practices in support of the SDGs.<sup>26</sup> In

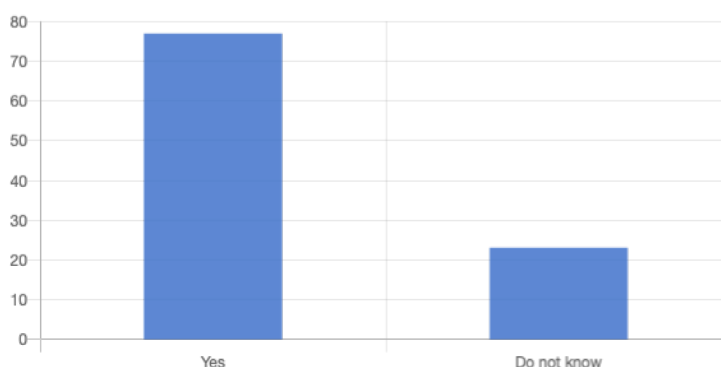
<sup>26</sup> See documents related to the 100<sup>th</sup> EXCOM meeting (21 September 2018) available at <https://unece.org/one-hundredth-meeting>.



line with EXCOM decision and the focus of the 68<sup>th</sup> Commission Session (9-10 April 2019) on smart sustainable cities,<sup>27</sup> the UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division (FLHD) organized the Day of Cities (8 April 2019) back-to-back with the Commission Session.

35. The possibility of establishing a Forum of Mayors was proposed during the 68<sup>th</sup> Commission Session<sup>28</sup> and it was subsequently organized by the secretariat. The crucial role of cities and local authorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs was recognized at the 80<sup>th</sup> session of CUDHLM, in 2019. The Committee decided to hold a Forum of Mayors on the first day of the 2020 and 2021 Committee Sessions with a similar format to the Day of Cities and focus on a specific thematic issue related to sustainable urban development, housing and land management.<sup>29</sup> The first Forum of Mayors, under the overall theme “City Action for a Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impact of Disasters and Climate Change”, took place in Geneva on 6 October 2020 (in hybrid format - online and in-person participation).
36. Most interviewees and 77 per cent of the survey respondents considered that the “natural affiliation” of the Forum was with CUDHLM. However, to converge CUDHLM and the Forum of Mayors processes in terms of scope and timing will bring about budgetary advantages minimizing the need for extrabudgetary resources. It is considered a UNECE internal matter though for most stakeholders.

**Graph 2.** Should the Forum of Mayors be organized back-to-back with the CUDHLM?



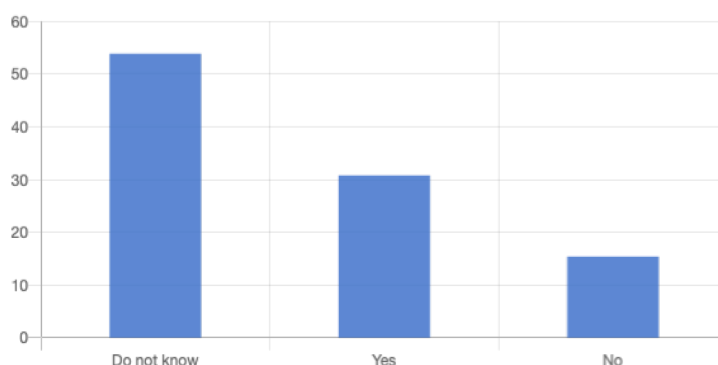
<sup>27</sup> The 68<sup>th</sup> Commission Session was organized on 9 and 10 April 2019 in Geneva under the overall theme “Smart Sustainable Cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development”. For further details, see <https://unece.org/info/events/event/18349>.

<sup>28</sup> The Russian Federation proposed that UNECE should continue its support to the work of cities and local authorities to further facilitate the exchange of experience and discuss solutions to address challenges to achieve the SDGs in urban areas and requested CUDHLM to explore the possibility of establishing a forum of Mayors. For further details, see ECE Biennial Report (28 April 2017 - 10 April 2019) (E/ECE/1488, para. 28) available at [https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/commission/2019/E\\_2019\\_37-1906911E.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/commission/2019/E_2019_37-1906911E.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Dedicating one of the three days of the Committee session to discussions concerning and involving the participation of local authorities, in particular mayors, following a similar format to the Day of Cities. See ECE/HBP/201, para. 35 available at <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=ECE%2FHBP%2F201&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>.

37. As shown in the graph above, the survey indicated that majority thought the Forum should be integrated into the activities of CUDHLM and only 23 per cent did not know. On the other hand, there was a split opinion about linking the Forum with the Commission session. Most did not know (54 per cent) while 31 per cent thought it would be a good idea and over 15 per cent considered it should not be. The Commission session has its own dynamics and many priorities so the Forum would probably be in the margins.

**Graph 3.** Should the Forum of Mayors be organized back-to-back with the Commission Session?



38. CUDHLM initially envisaged that the 2021 Forum of Mayors could be held in a different country.<sup>30</sup> However, no consensus was reached on the venue<sup>31</sup> and the decision was deferred to EXCOM at its 112<sup>th</sup> meeting.<sup>32</sup> Following informal consultations, EXCOM decided that the 2022 Forum is convened in Geneva back-to-back with RFSD.<sup>33</sup> The Forum outcomes are expected to be considered by CUDHLM at its 83<sup>rd</sup> session and by EXCOM during 2022. The second Forum of Mayors took place on 4 and 5 April 2022 with the overall theme “Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing the implementation of the SDGs”. This

<sup>30</sup> See ECE/HBP/205, paras. 2-5

(<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=ECE%2FHBP%2F205&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>).

<sup>31</sup> Two offers were received in response to the call to host the Forum - from Spain (Barcelona) and the Russian Federation (Murmansk). After two informal consultations (22 September 2020 and 1 October 2020), the CUDHLM Bureau recommended the Forum be hosted in Murmansk (Russian Federation) considering it more advantageous because of (a) geographical representation (because most of the UNECE official meetings are organized in Western Europe); (b) the importance of “leaving no one behind”, that is, organize the UN meeting in a smaller city which is not a major tourist destination; and (c) less resources needed for staff support and communication activities. Nevertheless, this recommendation was not supported by the Ukrainian delegation.

<sup>32</sup> See ECE/HBP/206, para. 22

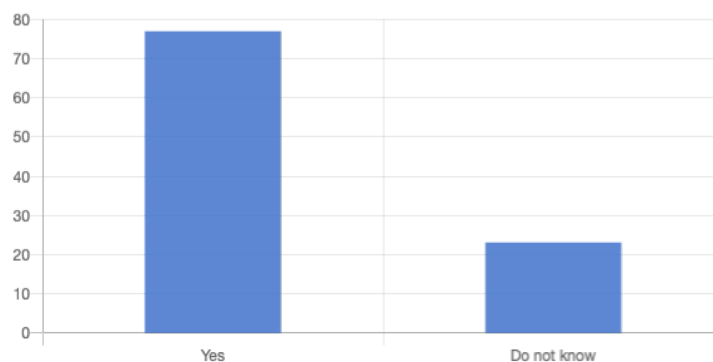
(<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=ECE%2FHBP%2F206&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>).

<sup>33</sup> 112<sup>th</sup> EXCOM Chair’s Conclusions (EXCOM/CONCLU/112, paras. 8-15). Available at [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/EXCOM-Conclu-112\\_0.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/EXCOM-Conclu-112_0.pdf).

theme is fully aligned with the focus of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC<sup>34</sup> and RFSD.<sup>35</sup>

39. The evaluation obtained mixed results about the value of linking the Forum with RFSD. Most interviewees considered that the coherence of the Forum was not enhanced in 2022, following its affiliation with RFSD. On the contrary, the survey results indicate that most stakeholders (77 per cent) considered the Forum should be organized back-to-back with RFSD.
40. It should, however, be noted that mayors attending the 2022 Forum of Mayors did not remain in Geneva to participate in the RFSD. Only the rapporteur of the Forum informed the RFSD, with no ensuing discussion or related decision. De facto, the two meetings remained quite separate. This seems to indicate that while informing the RFSD of the results of the Forum could be useful, having the meetings back-to-back may not be necessary.

**Graph 4.** Should the Forum of Mayors be organized back-to-back with the RFSD?



41. At the beginning of 2022, the secretariat analyzed four alternative options for the affiliation of Forum:
  - As part of CUDHLM (as in 2020)
  - As part of CUDHLM, back-to-back with RFSD (as in 2022)
  - Part of CUDHLM, back-to-back with the UNECE session
  - As an independent body.
42. The analysis compared the implications of each option in terms of subsidiarity and reporting, costs/budget, linkages with work of member States, substantive relevance and focus of the Forum and frequency of Forum and location ("informal note to support brainstorming with the SC as of 21/02/22" shared with the bureau).

### *Use of resources and supporting bodies*

<sup>34</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf#hlpf2022>

<sup>35</sup> <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2022>

43. The costs of the 2019 event were fully covered by extra-budgetary (XB) funds. At its 104<sup>th</sup> meeting, on 11 March 2019, EXCOM approved an XB project to ensure a balanced geographical and gender representation in the Day of Cities<sup>36</sup> by covering the travel expenses and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) of 11 mayors and vice mayors from selected countries from the CIS region and the Balkans.<sup>37</sup> The Government of Switzerland, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), contributed the total amount of USD 20,000.
44. In 2020 and 2022, efficiency was achieved by having the Forum as part of the CUDHLM session. Although the Forum was organized in April and the Committee session in October, the two events were part of the same CUDHLM session (Part I for the Forum of Mayors and Part II for the rest of the agenda of the Committee). Therefore, all conference-related costs (documents, translation, interpretation, conference room, etc.) were part of the same "package" covered by the regular budget (RB) funds. Extra-budgetary (XB) funds were used to strengthen other substantive matters and outreach.
45. According to the Technical Cooperation Project Form, the estimated project budget in 2020 included United Nations RB resources (equivalent to two-month salary of a P4-level staff) and XB resources (USD 197,589 funded by Switzerland).<sup>38</sup> The same arrangement was applied in 2022. The support provided through RB funds and staff was considered efficient and, for most stakeholders, considered a "natural option" for a regional initiative like the Forum of Mayors.
46. Although no staff was used exclusively for the Forum, the outreach was very positive and the feedback very good (including from mayors). The secretariat was described as "a constructive influence" and "a guardian of the United Nations procedures". Despite the difficult context, the secretariat was always seen as a neutral and professional actor. It has also facilitated the connection with the work of other subprogrammes and divisions (see below).
47. Over 85 per cent rated the support provided by the secretariat as mostly satisfactory (54 per cent) or highly satisfactory (31 per cent). Only the minor technical issues experienced during the presentations prevented most participants to consider the events a success. Over 92 per cent of the respondents to the survey assessed the organization of the events as mostly satisfactory (69 per cent) or highly satisfactory (23 per cent). Less than 8 per cent thought it was mostly unsatisfactory.

---

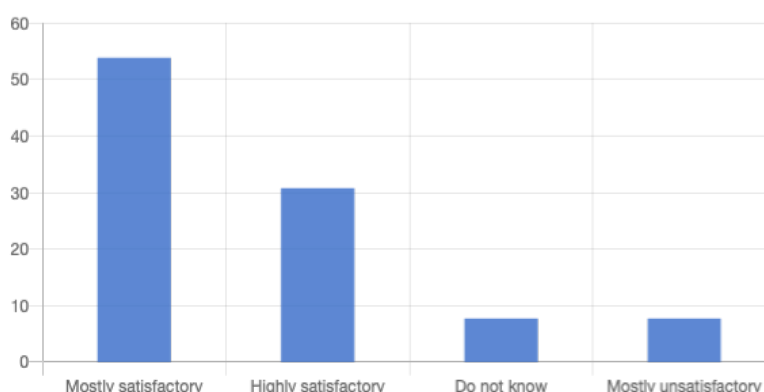
<sup>36</sup> Extrabudgetary project "Support to the organization of the Day of Cities" (Informal Document No. 2019/18 – EXCOM 104<sup>th</sup> meeting, Item 9). Available at [https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2019/EXCOM\\_104\\_11\\_March/Item\\_9\\_ECE\\_EX\\_2019\\_18\\_XB\\_7\\_Day\\_of\\_Cities\\_final.pdf](https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2019/EXCOM_104_11_March/Item_9_ECE_EX_2019_18_XB_7_Day_of_Cities_final.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> The identified target group/beneficiaries of the project were the mayors of Bishkek, Tashkent, Dushanbe, Ashgabat, Chisinau, Yerevan, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Polotsk and Novopolotsk) and the vice mayor of Tbilisi.

<sup>38</sup> Voluntary contributions from the Swiss Confederation included CHF137,000 from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and USD 60,000 from the Directorate of Political Affairs, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Confederation.



**Graph 5.** How effective was the support of the secretariat?



48. The website for the 2022 Forum was fully functional during the weeks before the event, including a smooth and simple registration process. Information was updated on a weekly basis, including the programme, background document and practical information for participants.<sup>39</sup> In particular, the background document proposes several recommendations to be considered by mayors for the future of the Forum.<sup>40</sup>
49. Very few minor shortcomings were mentioned during the interviews, such as the need for country representatives to manage participants themselves. Some stakeholders considered that the recently established roles of Regional Advisor and Secretary to CUDHLM<sup>41</sup> would contribute to a more efficient distribution of the work and others even thought that the Forum should be included in the mandate of UNECE. This would allow for minimal dependency on extra-budgetary funds with the risk of non-optimal earmarking.
50. In 2020, it was decided that a Steering Committee (SC) supported the Secretariat to identify the mayors to be invited, topic to be covered and cases to present. The Committee Bureau agreed on the SC composition at its meeting on 17 December 2019 (see the list of members in annex VII), including representatives of the Committee Bureau (Portugal, Switzerland, Belarus, Kazakhstan, United States, Italy, France and Spain), UNECE staff members of the UNECE Nexus on "Sustainable Smart Cities for all Ages" and external experts (Canton of Geneva, City of Geneva, Geneva Hub, Cardiff University, United Kingdom, etc.) It was also decided that the existing SC continues to provide support for the organization of the Forum of Mayors in 2022.
51. The Steering Committee was seen as an important instrument providing "institutional structure" for the Forum. Although the SC support was broadly appreciated, most stakeholders considered that there was a certain degree of unclarity in its role and mandate. This seemed particularly obvious when there was conflict. Interviewees referred to the need of "clarifying its relationship with

<sup>39</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org>.

<sup>40</sup> See the Note by the secretariat at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16GYeDMHPz5TXVfWVgJGUUzbuE-gaVPax/view>.

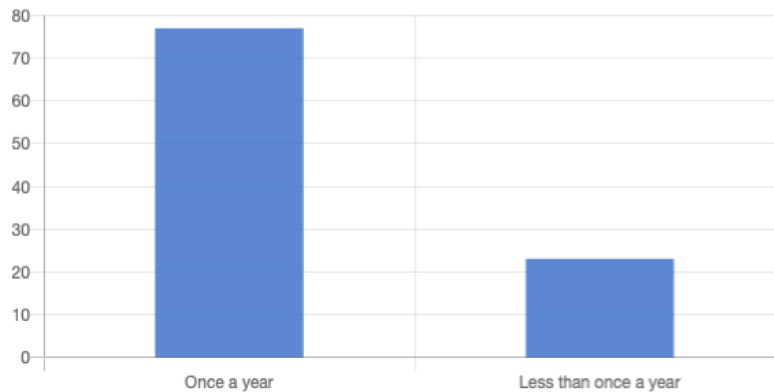
<sup>41</sup> Until recently, one staff member was de facto acting as both Regional Advisor and Secretary to CUDHLM.

both member States and the secretariat". As a coordinating mechanism, the Steering Committee provides advice just like a bureau but without the framework of agreed terms of reference.

### Logistics

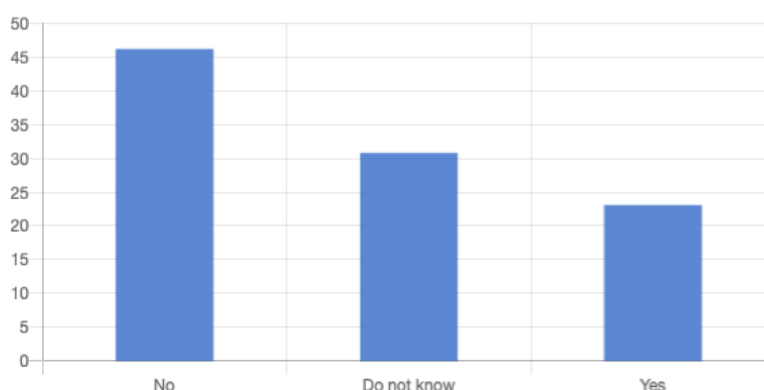
52. Although many stakeholders did not have a strong opinion about the frequency of the Forum, once per year was the preferred option for 77 per cent of the respondents to the survey. The main reason was that an annual event allows to "keep the momentum", especially in these early stages of the Forum. The difficult and quickly evolving context in the region was also mentioned in relation to the need for "a neutral platform to bring people together".
53. The fact that Mayors do not stay long in their position is another argument in favour of a yearly event to allow mixing new participants with previous ones. Nevertheless, organizing such a yearly event requires a significant effort, including to "find the narrative" to keep it relevant.

**Graph 6.** How often do you think that the Forum of Mayors should be organized?



54. In general, Geneva was seen by most stakeholders as a "neutral place" to host the Forum that would prevent the venue selection problems mentioned above. In addition, it would facilitate the participation of member States and ensure economies of scale, including the contribution of the Geneva Cities Hub. Having the Forum in Geneva helps to strengthen the character of the Forum and connection with United Nations processes (stress mayors as another layer of diplomacy).
55. Over 46 per cent of the respondents to the survey thought the Forum should not be organized in other cities than Geneva. Only 23 per cent considered otherwise.

**Graph 7.** Should the Forum of Mayors be organized in other cities than Geneva?



56. Nevertheless, there seemed to exist a lot of appetite for organizing the Forum in other in cities and many stakeholders thought it should be possible, especially considering that UNECE Committee sessions can be hosted in other countries with a Hosting Agreement (i.e., this year CUDHLM will be organized in San Marino). Alternating Geneva with other cities every other year (or even every third year) was seen as a good solution by many interviewees. This option may contribute to strengthen ownership and visibility (the Forum may be seen as one among many United Nations meetings in Geneva).

#### *Collaboration between subprogrammes and partnerships with the United Nations system and other stakeholders*

57. In addition to the above-mentioned synergies sought with RFSD and HLPF, the secretariat explored possibilities of cooperation with relevant subprogrammes in the preparation and organization of the Forum. In particular, the Inland Transport Committee invited the secretariat, in close coordination with the Bureau of CUDHLM, to formulate relevant proposals as part of the preparations to the Forum of Mayors in 2022 on how to best promote the activities and outputs of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)<sup>42</sup> related to sustainable urban transport.<sup>43</sup>
58. Nevertheless, most interviewees agreed that there is room to improve the cross-collaboration among UNECE subprogrammes. Some measures have already been implemented in this direction such as establishing a fully dedicated Regional Advisor position, which allows for a closer cooperation with other divisions.
59. The Forum gained influence at global level by, for example, linking the Urban Agenda with UN-Habitat and UNECE. Furthermore, the collaboration with the Geneva Cities Hub (GCH) was mutually beneficial, increased the visibility of the Forum and brought about spillover effects. GCH created the Mayors' Action

<sup>42</sup> <https://thepep.unece.org/pep>.

<sup>43</sup> The request was initially made for the Forum of Mayors 2021 (decision at the Inland Transport Committee's session in February 2020).



Platform (MAP) to follow-up on the Geneva Declaration of Mayors. The ultimate purpose is to hand over the tool (maybe to UNECE). The objectives of the platform are twofold:

- Showcase concrete actions and solutions devised by cities to address the issues covered by the Declaration of Mayors
- Create a safe space for mayors and their administrations to exchange experiences among peers.

60. Having the well-known architect Norman Foster opening both the 2020 and 2022 Forums and his involvement in the organization - *de facto* acting as its Patron - provided huge visibility to the events and the participation of urban stakeholders beyond the usual UNECE constituency. This also allowed bringing information on the Forum of Mayors to the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, led by Architect Norman Foster. Formalizing such position of "Patron" of the Forum may be even more beneficial for future years.

## 2.3 EFFECTIVENESS

### *Successive formats to deliver agreed outputs and objectives*

61. The purpose of the Day of Cities was to exchange views and share knowledge on best practices on urban sustainability and implementation of global agreements.<sup>44</sup> The event featured two roundtables in which mayors and deputy mayors from UNECE member States presented best practices from their cities, described challenges encountered in trying to make their cities smarter and more sustainable, and elaborated their vision for the future of urban sustainability in the region:

- The first roundtable focused on "Improving the quality of life of urban inhabitants". During this roundtable, the mayors were invited to discuss smart tools for a more sustainable environment, increased resilience to disasters and climate change, as well as affordable and healthy housing, improved access to basic services for vulnerable populations and sustainable infrastructure.
- The second roundtable focused on "Improving the efficiency and competitiveness of urban operations and services". This roundtable included a discussion on smart tools for road safety and sustainable urban mobility, the desired infrastructure for cities of the future, and policy instruments needed to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of urban services.
- Question and answer sessions allowed the audience to inquire about specific projects or initiatives and the roundtables were complemented by an exhibition where the mayors and their staff showcased some of their most notable urban practices.

---

<sup>44</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/forum-of-mayors-2019>.

62. The main purpose of the event was to promote peer-learning and exchange of knowledge to enhance the understanding of urban authorities/policymakers at the city level on (i) successful examples of transition towards smart sustainable cities; and (ii) existing instruments and tools at UNECE for sustainable urban development (including measuring progress towards smart sustainable cities).
63. Three side events were organized during the Day of Cities and the extrabudgetary project mentioned above included a third expected accomplishment - increased cooperation at the city level to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region.<sup>45</sup>
64. The first Forum of Mayors, under the overall theme “City Action for a Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impact of Disasters and Climate Change”, took place in Geneva on 6 October 2020 (in hybrid format - online and in-person participation).<sup>46</sup> The initial topic for the Forum (“Climate Actions in Cities”) was adjusted to increase its relevance and alignment with the mandate of CUDHLM.<sup>47</sup> The Forum was divided into two sessions in which city leaders presented local actions.
65. In the margins of the Committee session and the Forum of Mayors, a roundtable organized by the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, in cooperation with UN-Habitat and the Geneva Cities Hub,<sup>48</sup> brought together experts from various backgrounds to foster cooperation and accelerate progress on the implementation of SDG 11.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> The three expected results of the project were:

- EA1. Increased peer-learning, and exchange of knowledge on sustainability of cities in the UNECE region.
- EA2. Improved understanding of policymakers at the city level of the UNECE tools for sustainable urban development (including measuring progress towards smart sustainable cities) and successful urban policies and practices.
- EA3. Improved cooperation at the city level to contribute to the achievement of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region.

<sup>46</sup> Initially planned as an international event in Geneva, the Forum utilized a hybrid format of in-person participation and online sessions in response to the COVID-19 travel restrictions during that time. For further details, see <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/forum-of-mayors-2020>.

<sup>47</sup> The topic for the Forum of Mayors, initially agreed by the Committee, was “Climate Actions in Cities” upon the recommendations of the Committee Bureau meeting, which took place on 17 December 2019. The Bureau recommended to the Committee secretariat to focus the discussions of the Forum to topics within the mandate of the Committee such as urban planning, housing and land management. At its meeting on 25 March 2020, the Steering Committee underlined significant concerns raised over the spread of COVID-19 at the global level vis-à-vis its long-term economic and social impacts, especially on cities. Given the relevance of the topic for cities in 2020, the Steering Committee, at its meeting on 8 April 2020, decided to adjust the theme of the Forum of Mayors 2020 to “City action for a resilient future: Strengthening local government preparedness and response to emergencies and the impact of disasters and climate change.” and to submit this proposal to the Bureau of the Committee for endorsement and then to the Committee (online), so that EXCOM could be informed accordingly.

<sup>48</sup> The Geneva Cities Hub was established in March 2020 to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations, international organizations, permanent missions and country representations based in Geneva, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academia, and to facilitate their connection to cities and city networks throughout the world. For further information, visit <https://www.genevacitieshub.org>.

<sup>49</sup> The SDG 11 Day took place as an informal meeting on 5 October 2020 (in-person in Geneva and online) under the theme ‘Supporting city actions for a resilient future’. The event was jointly organized by UNECE, the

66. According to the Technical Cooperation Project Form and the Annual Implementation Report (Support to the Organization of the Day of Cities, financed from voluntary contributions by the Swiss Confederation), the aim of the Forum was to strengthen the capacity of member States to implement the 2030 Agenda by providing a platform for policymaking at the local level that facilitate a dialogue between city and national governments and lead into identifying policy priorities of the Committee.
67. In addition to reinforcing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDG 11, the Forum also intended to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing.<sup>50</sup> The Technical Cooperation Project Form identified two expected accomplishments (EA) that are similar to the ones of the Day of Cities:
- Increased peer-learning and exchange of knowledge on sustainability of cities in the UNECE region (EA1).
  - Improved understanding of the policymakers at the city level of the UNECE tools for sustainable urban development (EA2).
68. The second Forum of Mayors took place on 4-5 April 2022 with the overall theme "Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing the implementation of the SDGs". This theme is fully aligned with the focus of HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC<sup>51</sup> and RFSD.<sup>52</sup> The Forum was organized in four sessions consisting of visual presentations from mayors (11 side events were also organized):<sup>53</sup>
- Resilient, healthy and climate-neutral buildings and affordable and adequate housing
  - Vibrant public spaces, green cities and nature-based solutions
  - Sustainable urban transport, shared mobility and safer roads
  - Sustainable urban planning, the 15-minute city and smart urban development solutions.
69. Although some stakeholders thought that the one-day duration of the Day of Cities is enough; the majority considered that a two-day event was a better option allowing time for networking. On the other hand, there was a broad agreement that the most crucial issue was for the agenda of the Forum to be

---

Geneva Cities Hub and UN-Habitat bringing together representatives from 24 organizations (one of the largest gatherings of city networks) and experts from various backgrounds.

<sup>50</sup> See the Forum of Mayors concept note (ECE/HBP/2020/2) available at [https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/documents/2020/ECE\\_HBP\\_2020\\_2-E.pdf](https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/documents/2020/ECE_HBP_2020_2-E.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf#hlpf2022>

<sup>52</sup> <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2022>.

<sup>53</sup> Each session will be moderated by the Chair of a relevant UNECE Committee or Working Party and/or an eminent expert. Each session will include presentations from mayors from UNECE countries and from outside the region. The upcoming Forum is moving away from words to images allowing attendants to visualize the transformation that mayors themselves are envisaging, see the challenges and appreciate successful transformations. There will be no written statements or speeches from the mayors; each of them will have about 10 to 12 minutes to describe 2-4 photographs of his/her city.

aligned with the priorities of the member States. All respondents to the survey assessed the content of the presentations as highly or mostly interesting.

70. The use of pictures in the 2022 Forum contributed to more lively presentations. While 85 per cent of the respondents to the survey rated the format of the presentations as mostly or highly appropriate, only 15 per cent considered it a little appropriate. Although the five-minute presentations seemed too short, they allowed all mayors to speak. The implementation of other possible formats is not straight forward. For example, panels would require establishing a process for selecting panelists.
71. Videoconference was useful but physical presence (in-person participation) was very important for most stakeholders. Many stakeholders thought that interactions should be increased to allow discussions among the Mayors and with member States. Activities such as side events and coffee gatherings were crucial and some demanded to allow more opportunities for these exchanges.

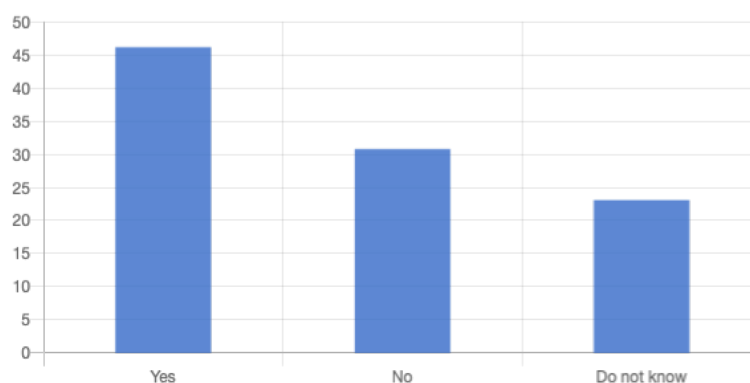
#### *Effective platform for the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular mayors and cities*

72. UNECE provided the intergovernmental framework within which the Forum was held. The Forum has also helped to improve UNECE quality of services. As put during the interviews, "it contributed to increase the awareness of staff about how to help cities, including working with national governments. It allowed identifying best practices and share them through technical cooperation." Although concrete examples were not provided, the Forum was seen as "a very helpful tool to generate funding in countries with economies in transition for achieving the SDGs (e.g., the signature of the Ministry of Finance is often needed for municipalities to get a loan from multilateral banks).
73. The selection system limits the participation in the Forum to one city per member State. The process involves several steps and allows member States to select the mayors of their choice:<sup>54</sup>
- The secretariat prepares a list of mayors (including some alternatives for each country in the order of preference) according to some criteria including relevant projects and initiatives and existing activities of UNECE in the city.
  - The list of selected mayors/cities is shared with the permanent Missions in Geneva that can confirm the first choice, one of the alternatives provided by the secretariat or choose a completely different mayor.
  - Once all the mayors are selected, the secretariat sends invitation letters.
74. Although the survey results indicated that most stakeholders (46 per cent) considered the limit of one participating city per country appropriate, 31 per cent thought it was not.

---

<sup>54</sup> The described selection process applied to the Forum of Mayors 2020 and 2022 but not to the Day of Cities (2019).

**Graph 8.** Is the current limit of one participating city per country appropriate?



75. For the second Forum of Mayors, the Steering Committee decided to include two mayors from outside the UNECE region per session (a total of eight - two from each of the regional commissions).
76. The Day of Cities brought together 375 participants (in person and remotely through UN TV webcast), including more than 50 mayors and deputy mayors from 33 countries of the UNECE region. It generated more than 500 posts on social media and more than 6.5 million people were reached through social and traditional media channels. The event allowed discussing a wide range of cross-cutting issues such as:
- Smart tools for more sustainable environment and increased resilience to disasters and climate change
  - Affordable, energy-efficient and adequate housing for different groups
  - Inclusive and sustainable infrastructure
  - Smart tools for road safety and sustainable urban mobility
  - Inclusive governance.
77. The discussions highlighted that to meet the targets for urban-related SDGs, more opportunities and more direct engagement by local governments was needed at the international level and welcomed the Day of Cities as one such notable initiative.<sup>55</sup> The outcomes of the event improved the understanding of UNECE about how to best support member States and their cities and informed the intergovernmental discussions of the 68<sup>th</sup> Commission Session.

**Table 3.** Participants in the events

	<i>Total</i>	<i>In person</i>	<i>Online</i>
DoC 2019	375	375	-
FoM 2020	135	135	-
FoM 2022	516	144	372
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>372</b>

<sup>55</sup> See ECE/HBP/200, paras. 22-34([https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2019/ECE\\_HBP\\_200-ENG.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2019/ECE_HBP_200-ENG.pdf)).

78. The 2020 Forum brought together 135 participants, including 40 mayors from 36 countries as well as policymakers, international development partners and specialists. It is worthy to stress that the Day of Cities was organized in pre-COVID-19 conditions while the other two events were under serious in-person participation restrictions in the United Nations premises.
79. It included 36 interventions by the participating mayors and deputy mayors with the aim of exchanging ideas and best practices, forging closer collaborative links, and facilitating dialogues between cities, national governments and international organizations. It is estimated that more than 1,000 people watched the sessions on UN Web TV and 13 million people were reached through social and traditional media channels.
80. The two sessions of the Forum allowed to debate on the following themes:
- Implementation of the SDGs begins at the local level and is, in many respects, a local matter.
  - Collaboration between cities is essential to solve all kinds of problems; city networks and forums proved effective to facilitate dialogue between cities and national governments.
  - Urban sustainable financing is essential to solve all kinds of problems in cities and have become especially useful in the context of the pandemic.
  - Building long-term resilience to crises of all kinds is a widely held goal, and there was consensus that responding to problems as they come or individually is not the right approach.
  - Setting a date for carbon neutrality is a necessary step in galvanizing efforts to reduce emissions and move towards more sustainable economic models.
81. At the end of the Forum, the mayors endorsed, by acclamation, the Geneva Declaration of Mayors.<sup>56</sup> The Declaration is an ambitious platform purporting to place the SDGs at the centre of the recovery efforts and create new urban realities for the benefit of all. A database including good practices from the Declaration is available on the website of the Forum. Currently, there are 10 examples that, supposedly, can be filtered by category and area of activity (this feature is not functional though).
82. The outcomes and recommendations of the Forum were presented at the 81<sup>st</sup> CUDHLM session (7 October 2020) and, given the cross-cutting character of the theme of the Forum, the outcomes were also expected to be transmitted to other UNECE intergovernmental committees.
83. The Concept Note also identified key partnerships with organizations within the United Nations System (UN DESA, UN Habitat, ITU, OHCHR, etc.), city alliances (Geneva Cities Hub, United Cities and Local Governments, Covenant of Mayors, Eurocities, Local Governments for Sustainability, Council of European Municipalities and Regions etc.), academia (University of Geneva, University of Glasgow), civil society and the private sector.

---

<sup>56</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/geneva-declaration-mayors>

84. The 2022 Forum brought together 516 participants, including 144 in-person participants (28 per cent)<sup>57</sup> and 372 online participants through the UN TV webcast (72 per cent). In line with EXCOM decisions at its 121<sup>st</sup> meeting, the invitations to all city officials from the Russian Federation and Belarus were rescinded.<sup>58</sup>
85. In addition to the opening speech by the Deputy Mayor of Geneva, there were 44 presentations from mayors and deputy mayors (including the recorded presentation from the Mayor of Boston) and one presentation from a municipality advisor. In addition, other Mayors participated in the side-events, for example, the Mayor of Kyiv joined (remotely), the side event co-sponsored by the Italian and United States Missions in Geneva, the Municipality of Bari, the City Diplomacy Lab of the Columbia Global Center of Paris and the International Association of French-speaking Mayors.
86. The two sessions of the Forum allowed to debate on the following themes:
- The high level of congestion and pollution caused by the heavy reliance on cars as the main mode of urban transport
  - Dispensing with the existing car-centered city-designs for people-centered cities
  - The worsening air quality, biodiversity and the lingering impacts of climate change including desertification
  - The transition to sustainable energy and the imperatives of phasing-out dependence on fossil fuel and improving energy-efficiency
  - Supply shortage of housing stock, which makes it difficult to ensure housing affordability
  - Facilitating access and promoting proximity to services in line with the 15-minute city concept
  - The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., halt on construction activity) with the hardest hit on the most vulnerable citizens
  - The impact of the war in Ukraine with the cities' infrastructure and decades of achievements destroyed and the negative economic impacts with detrimental consequences on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
87. At the end of the Forum, the mayors endorsed the recommendations on the future of the Forum. The recommendations contained in the document also informed this evaluation (see section 1.3).

---

<sup>57</sup> Out of 289 registered from over 63 countries.

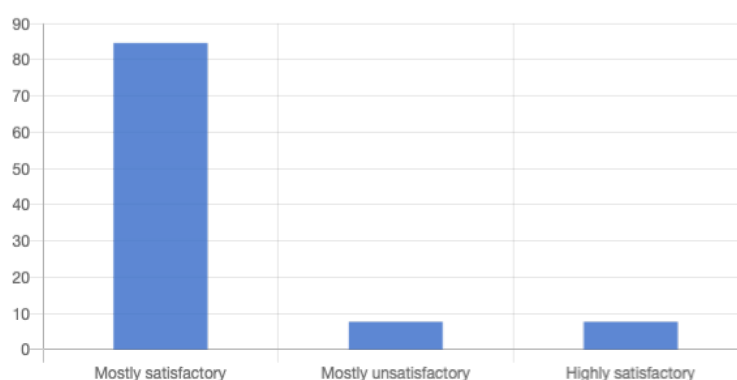
<sup>58</sup> While the decision did not pertain to representatives of national delegations/diplomats, it applied to the mayors as they were considered experts and not part of national delegations/diplomats. See decision ECE/EX/2022/L.7 adopted at the 121st meeting of EXCOM requesting that the secretariat rescinds any and all invitations to city officials from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus ([https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/ECE\\_EX\\_2022\\_L.7-2203316E.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/ECE_EX_2022_L.7-2203316E.pdf)).

## 2.4 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

### *Peer learning, enhanced understanding and strengthened cooperation*

88. Among the stakeholders, 85 per cent believed that the contribution of the Forum to peer learning and exchange of knowledge was satisfactory. It was broadly highlighted though that more informal space for exchange should be planned.

**Graph 9.** How do you assess the event(s) contribution to peer learning and exchange of knowledge?

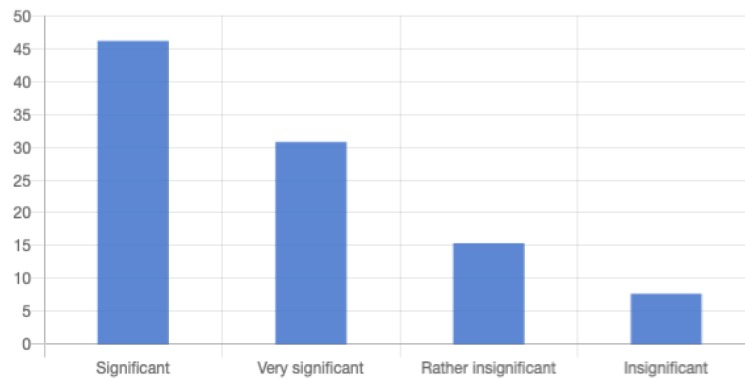


89. All the respondents to the survey and interviewees considered the contribution of the Forum in enhancing the understanding of urban authorities/policymakers at the city level on successful examples of transition towards smart sustainable cities as satisfactory. The percentage of respondents who also thought that the Forum had contributed to enhancing the understanding of urban authorities/policymakers at the city level on existing UNECE instruments and tools for sustainable urban development (including measuring progress towards smart sustainable cities) was 85 per cent.

90. A high percentage of the respondents to the survey (76 per cent) considered the Forum had made a significant contribution to strengthening cooperation at the city level to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, 23 per cent thought that it was rather insignificant. In particular, a few stakeholders remarked on the "individual agendas" of the speakers and the lack of focus on UNECE instruments during the events. The respondents believed that more information on impact measurement would be beneficial, that is, on how cities measure their impact and progress. This would contribute to strengthening the common agendas of the mayor, the possibility to contribute to other processes meaningfully and the realization of that the Forum "belongs to them" (mayors) and thus, political and substantive discussions are driven by them.



**Graph 10.** How do you assess the event(s) contribution to strengthen cooperation at the city level to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

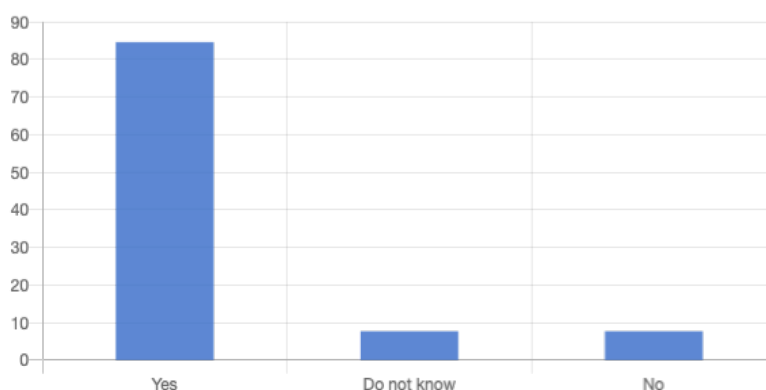


### *Ownership and engagement of local governments*

91. To strengthen ownership and ensure an active engagement of local governments on issues and practical discussions on sustainable urban development at the regional and international levels, it is crucial to continue involving participating cities in the substantial preparation of the meetings as indicated in the 2022 Forum outcome document (recommendations on the future of the Forum of Mayors). Intersession events would contribute to strengthening the impact and visibility of the Forum. In this respect, follow-up events are being discussed with several cities and the Norman Foster Foundation (thematic workshops).
92. In the margins of the 2022 Forum, some mayors, led by the mayor of Vilnius, agreed on a declaration. The text of the declaration was read in the meeting and made available online on the Vilnius website for mayors who were not present at the Forum to sign. The secretariat clarified that the declaration cannot be considered an official outcome of the Forum but shows how mayors had owned the Forum and how they consider it a venue for their deliberations and initiatives.<sup>59</sup>
93. Most stakeholders considered that discussing political matters at the Forum added to its value, including 85 per cent of the respondents to the survey (only one respondent thought it did not). In general, it was believed that it was something that could not and should not have been prevented. All stakeholders praised the secretariat for how they managed the situation.

<sup>59</sup> The declaration was signed by 21 Mayors and Deputy Mayors and states that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is the single most important topic for Europe and all the free world. See [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z-jKrpnglzn03Ja7eBHGIWNjh\\_A6cvc3/view?fbclid=IwAR3HDXzqIPgwziPmrThkiqZ514Lineu2L7dzIeqV2unib5mEgU2-M7IJIUU](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z-jKrpnglzn03Ja7eBHGIWNjh_A6cvc3/view?fbclid=IwAR3HDXzqIPgwziPmrThkiqZ514Lineu2L7dzIeqV2unib5mEgU2-M7IJIUU).

**Graph 11.** Has discussing political matters at the Forum added to its value?



94. Some stakeholders referred to the Forum of Mayors as an action-oriented experiment to link global-national-local diplomacy. In this sense, most stakeholders considered the forum allowed Mayors to participate in the intergovernmental processes in their own right. While 61 per cent of the respondents to the survey agreed with this idea, 38 per cent did not agree.

#### *Visibility and participation of Mayors from other regions*

95. According to UN Web TV statistics, there were about 950-1,050 viewers of the 2022 Forum from 71 countries until 13 April 2022. A total of 858 posts had been recorded on Twitter (including 232 original posts)<sup>60</sup> in 10 languages<sup>61</sup> with a potential reach of 11.2 million people.
96. A total audience of 764.5 million people was estimated to have been reached through 195 media articles (recorded during the period 4-8 April 2022)<sup>62</sup> in 21 languages<sup>63</sup> on the Forum of Mayors 2022 and the side events.<sup>64</sup> The majority of the articles were on the side events and almost one third were related to the addresses from the Mayors of Kyiv and Kharkiv. The first day of the Forum (4 April 2022) reached the number one spot in Reuters which is the highest visibility ever for UNECE (it had never reached even number 10 spot before).
97. Recognizing that the potential of the Forum extends far beyond the UNECE region and that its outcomes will contribute to the global vision of the future of cities (see, for example, the opening remarks of the Director General of UNOG), the speakers included six mayors or deputy mayors from outside the region.<sup>65</sup> Most stakeholders appreciated this participation but many highlighted that it should be valuable for both sides and clear criteria to invite them should be defined.

<sup>60</sup> The top five Twitter accounts were @UNECE, @UNECEHLM, @TBB, @GENetwork and @FranceONUGeneve.

<sup>61</sup> Mostly English (75 per cent), Spanish (8 per cent) and Italian (7 per cent).

<sup>62</sup> Major sources included: Reuters, Le Monde, The Guardian, Daily Mail, The Telegraph, The New York Times, Washington Post, EFE, El Mundo, ABC, ANSA, La Stampa, BBC, USA Today, Haberler, Euronews etc.

<sup>63</sup> Mainly in English (36 per cent), Italian (17 per cent) and Spanish (15 per cent).

<sup>64</sup> The 195 media articles include 46 articles specifically on the address of Mayor Klitschko of Kyiv, 18 on the address from Mayor Terekhov of Kharkiv and 23 on the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) side event “Football as an accelerator for change.”

<sup>65</sup> Accra (Ghana), Agadir (Morocco), Campinas (Brazil), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Hod Hasharon (Israel) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia).

98. The other Regional Commissions have shown interest in the Forum, although this could not be thoroughly confirmed from the interviews. For example, the representative of UN ESCAP noted that the Forum is an important international event. While there is broad agreement that the Forum should be kept as a regional initiative, some respondents suggested that including a “global segment” in future sessions could be beneficial to the Forum.

### 3. MAIN CONCLUSIONS

#### Relevance

99. The role of mayors and cities as a positive and growing force on the global stage was broadly acknowledged. It is necessary for UNECE to engage with cities to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of its work.
100. Mandated by an intergovernmental body, the Forum has emerged as a broad and valued platform to engage ECE mayors and member States in practical discussions on sustainable urban development in the region.

#### Efficiency and coherence

101. Although the Forum has its own programme and agenda and has been operating independently from other UNECE bodies, it being *de facto* part of CUDHLM has ensured its relevance and effectiveness. The link with the Committee – formal body that allows to bring the output of the Forum into the official discussions – is very valuable.
102. The Forum should be a crucial instrument for implementing the Agenda 2030 and localizing the SDGs.
103. The Steering Committee, established to coordinate the preparatory work and organization of the Forum, is currently providing advice but without the framework of agreed terms of reference. There is a need to further clarify its relationship with both member States and the secretariat.
104. UNECE provided efficient support through regular budget staff. Although no personnel were used exclusively for the Forum, the outreach was positive and the feedback very good. Over 92 per cent of the stakeholders approached as part of this evaluation assessed the organization of the events as satisfactory and 85 per cent rated the support provided by the secretariat satisfactory.
105. The secretariat has recently been strengthened with a fully dedicated Regional Advisor position and a JPO funded by Italy at the P2 level. This should contribute to improving cross-collaboration with other divisions as well as the quality of services of UNECE in general.

#### Effectiveness

106. The current process of selecting the participating cities fully corresponds to the intergovernmental nature of UNECE. The limit of one city per country is a pragmatic approach to maximize cost-effectiveness.
107. The Forum is “work in progress” with immense opportunities to build up a record of action beyond sharing experiences. It is necessary to keep the momentum and to provide a response to a quickly evolving context by offering a neutral platform to bring stakeholders together.
108. Geneva offers a “neutral place” to host the Forum, one that minimizes any selection problems. In addition, it facilitates the participation of member States, ensures economies of scale (including the contribution of the Geneva Cities Hub)

and strengthens the character of the Forum and connection with United Nations processes (stressing mayors as another layer of diplomacy).

### *Impact and sustainability*

109. Between 85 per cent and 100 per cent of the stakeholders believed that the Forum satisfactorily contributed to peer learning, the exchange of knowledge and increased understanding by urban authorities of successful examples of transitioning toward smart sustainable cities. Stakeholders broadly highlighted that more space for informal exchange should be planned.
110. Involving participating cities in the substantial preparation of the meetings proved an excellent strategy to strengthen ownership and ensure active engagement of local governments on issues as well as practical discussions on sustainable urban development at the regional and international levels.
111. The Forum has increased its relevance by providing a venue for deliberations and initiatives by UNECE mayors. Allowing the participants to discuss political matters contributed to strengthening ownership and visibility in 2022. The secretariat demonstrated excellent skills in resolving conflict and managing difficult situations that could have jeopardized the event.
112. While there is broad agreement that the Forum should be kept as a regional initiative, the potential of the Forum extends far beyond the ECE region, as its outcomes will contribute to the global vision of the future of cities. Most stakeholders appreciated the participation of mayors from outside the ECE region. Many highlighted that the Forum is also valuable for UNECE and non-UNECE member States and that clear criteria to invite them should be defined.
113. Having the well-known architect Norman Foster opening both the 2020 and 2022 Forums and his involvement in the Forum organization – *de facto* acting as its patron – provided huge visibility to the events and the participation of urban stakeholders beyond the usual UNECE constituency.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

114. Recommendation 1: Formally establish the Forum of Mayors. It represents an innovative initiative that (i) responds to the role of mayors and cities as a positive and growing force on the global stage; and (ii) ensures the relevance and effectiveness of UNECE.
115. Recommendation 2: Further strengthen the connection of the Forum with the work of CUDHLM by attaching it to the annual sessions of the Committee and finding a complementary narrative but keeping the Forum's own programme and agenda.
116. Recommendation 3: Keeping the tradition of providing a report to inform the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) is a good practice and could be maintained.
117. Recommendation 4: Have informal meetings with the representatives of municipalities to define the theme of the Forum's meetings. Consider organizing the presentations specifically around progress towards the SDGs.
118. Recommendation 5: Provide more information at the Forum on impact measurement to strengthen the role of the Forum as a crucial instrument to keep mayors and cities focused on the 2030 Agenda by, for example, presenting existing UNECE tools for sustainable urban development, measuring progress toward smart sustainable cities, developing urban SDG strategies, trade-offs, implementation, monitoring, participation, etc.
119. Recommendation 6: Consider hiring one dedicated staff to strengthen the secretariat. In this respect, the Government of Italy has recently provided support through a JPO at the P2 level to help with the Forum. If the experience proves successful, it should be considered to make this position a regular budget one.
120. Recommendation 7: Strengthen the connection with the work of other UNECE subprogrammes and divisions. The above-mentioned JPO position, together with the recently established fully dedicated Regional Advisor position, should contribute to improving cross-collaboration with other divisions and the quality of UNECE services.
121. Recommendation 8: Develop terms of reference that clearly define the role and mandate of the Steering Committee as a crucial instrument for providing an "institutional structure" for the Forum and guiding its activities. The terms of reference would also further clarify the relationship of the Forum with both member States and the secretariat.
122. Recommendation 9: Strengthen the current city selection system that fully corresponds with the intergovernmental nature of UNECE. Further develop objective selection criteria to ensure alignment with the work of CUDHLM and maximize impact. The limit of one city per country is a pragmatic approach. In the future, an increased number could be considered if sufficient resources are available. In any case, the selection should allow to mix new with previous participants.

123. Recommendation 10: Organize the Forum on an annual basis, at least until it becomes a well-known event and frequency could be then reconsidered. The Forum is a work in progress with immense opportunities to build up a record of action beyond sharing experiences. A yearly event would allow the Forum to “keep the momentum” and provide a response to a quickly evolving context by offering a neutral platform to bring stakeholders together.
124. Recommendation 11: Organize the Forum two or three times in Geneva and then consider alternating every other year. This would minimize any selection problems, facilitate participation, ensure economies of scale, strengthen the Forum’s character and connection with United Nations processes and stress mayors as another layer of diplomacy.
125. Recommendation 12: Allow space to discuss political matters that could happen on the sides of the Forum (e.g., non-official declarations or discussions, side events, etc.), but with consideration to include more political discussions and outcome in the formal session (together with the presentations with images). It is necessary to keep the relevance of the initiative by providing a venue for mayors’ deliberations and initiatives. This will also strengthen ownership and visibility.
126. Recommendation 13: Consider including a “global segment” in the Forum’s future sessions so as to contribute to the global vision of the future of cities. The selection of participants should be based on clear criteria to ensure that their engagement benefits all parties, including the other Regional Commissions of the United Nations.
127. Recommendation 14: Consider formalizing the position of “Patron” of the Forum to increase its visibility and the participation of urban stakeholders beyond the usual UNECE constituency.

## ANNEX I. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

### I. Purpose

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of UNECE Forum of Mayors for the period 2019-2022.

The results of the evaluation will be considered by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) at its 83<sup>rd</sup> session and by EXCOM during 2022. Based on the results of the evaluation, EXCOM will agree on whether to extend the Forum of Mayors beyond 2022 as well as on the objectives, format and frequency of the Forum.

### II. Scope

The evaluation will be guided by the objectives, indicators of achievement and means of verification established in the logical framework of the project documents. The evaluation will cover the full period of implementation from 2019 to March 2022.

The following events are included in the scope of the evaluation:

- Day of Cities, held on 8 April 2019, in the Palais de Nations in Geneva
- Forum of Mayors, held on 6 October 2020, in the Palais de Nations in Geneva
- Forum of Mayors to be held in March 2022, back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, as foreseen in EXCOM decision ECE/EX/2020/L.16

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated at all stages of an evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's revised gender-related norms and standards. Therefore, the evaluation will assess how gender considerations were included in the process and it would make recommendations on how gender can be better included in the process.

### III. Background

The objective of component (a) housing and land management of ECE subprogramme 8 was defined as follows for the biennium 2018-2019: "to improve housing, urban and land governance, and to promote the evidence-based formulation and implementation of sustainable housing [and] land (...) policies in the region"<sup>66</sup>. During the biennium, the activities of the subprogramme, under the umbrella of the Committee on Housing and Land Management<sup>67</sup>, were further aligned with the two central mandates of the decade: (a) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>68</sup>, and (b) the New Urban Agenda<sup>69</sup>

Against these mandates, ECE Forests, Land and Housing Division (FLHD) prepared and organized a Day of Cities on 8 April 2019, one day before the beginning of the sixty-eighth Commission Session, which took place on 9 and 10 April 2019 under the overall theme of

---

<sup>66</sup> <https://undocs.org/a/71/6/rev.1> ; Programme 17 Economic development in Europe, subprogramme 8 Housing, land management and population

<sup>67</sup> Renamed Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, further to [ECOSOC resolution 2019/34](#) of 31 July 2019

<sup>68</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/res/70/1>

<sup>69</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/res/71/256>



“Smart Sustainable Cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development”. The Day of Cities brought together over 400 registered participants, over 50 Mayors and deputy Mayors from 33 countries of the ECE region. The discussions highlighted that to meet the targets for urban-related SDGs, more opportunities and more direct engagement by local governments is needed at the international level and welcomed the Day of Cities as one such notable initiative.<sup>70</sup>

The possibility of establishing a Forum of Mayors was proposed by one delegation during the sixty-eighth Commission Session<sup>71</sup>, subsequently developed by the secretariat and agreed by the Committee on Housing and Land Management during its 80<sup>th</sup> session. The Committee also decided that the Forum of Mayors will be organized on the first day of the Committee session in 2020 and 2021 and will focus on a specific thematic issue related to sustainable urban development, housing and land management<sup>72</sup>.

The first Forum of Mayors, under the overall theme “City Action for a Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impact of Disasters and Climate Change”, took place in Geneva on 6 October 2020. The Geneva Forum of Mayors brought over 40 mayors from 39 countries together to discuss challenges facing cities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis and its solutions that have at their fore front the SDGs. At the end of the Forum, the Mayors endorsed, by acclamation, the Geneva Declaration of Mayors<sup>73</sup>, an ambitious platform purporting to “place the SDGs at the centre of our recovery efforts and create new urban realities for the benefit of all”<sup>74</sup>

The bureau of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) initially envisaged that the Forum of Mayors could be held in another country in 2021, before an assessment of the meeting format to be conducted in 2022<sup>75</sup>. However, no consensus could be found on the venue of the Forum of Mayors 2021, and the Committee decided to defer the decision to the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) at its 112<sup>th</sup> meeting<sup>76</sup>.

Following informal consultations<sup>77</sup>, ECE EXCOM decided that instead of holding the Forum of Mayors in 2021, it will be convened back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) in March 2022 in Geneva<sup>78</sup>. ECE EXCOM further decided that the Forum 2022 will be supported by the existing Steering Committee, but report both to the RFSD and to CUDHLM, as appropriate.

ECE EXCOM finally decided that the evaluation of the Forum will take place in 2022 and results will be considered by CUDHLM at its 83rd session and EXCOM during 2022.

#### IV. Issues

---

<sup>70</sup> [ECE/HBP/200](#); paras 22 to 34

<sup>71</sup> [E/ECE/1488](#); para. 28

<sup>72</sup> [ECE/HBP/201](#); para. 35

<sup>73</sup> <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/declaration.html>

<sup>74</sup> [ECE/HBP/206](#); Annex II

<sup>75</sup> [ECE/HBP/205](#); paras 2 to 5

<sup>76</sup> [ECE/HBP/206](#); paras 22

<sup>77</sup> [Chair’s Conclusions](#) of 112th EXCOM; paras 8 to 15

<sup>78</sup> [ECE/EX/2020/L.16](#)

The evaluation criteria are relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The term “Fora” in this section encompasses the 2019 Days of Cities, the 2020 and 2022 Forum of Mayors.

Relevance:

1. How relevant have the Fora been to the Programme of Work of component (a) of subprogramme 8?
2. How relevant have been the Fora to reflect issues of particular interest to the region and enhance sub regional cooperation?
3. How relevant have the Fora been to the wider UN priorities, inter alia, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing?
4. To what extent have the Fora contributed to gender equality, disability inclusion and to an increased focus towards the most vulnerable?

Efficiency:

5. To what extent did the organization of the Fora support an efficient use of resources in ECE?
6. How efficient was the support provided by ECE regular budget funded staff to organize these events?

Effectiveness:

7. How effective were the successive formats to deliver agreed objectives? What were the final outputs delivered?
8. Have the Fora provided an effective platform for the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular Mayors and cities?
9. How effective was the support of the secretariat to organize the Fora?

Sustainability

10. Has the Forum evolved to take into account the lessons derived from previous Fora?
11. How sustainable is it for the Housing Unit to organize a recurrent Forum of Mayors, vis-à-vis the other deliverables included in its Programme of Work?
12. Which frequency appears the most sustainable for the Forum?

Coherence:

13. How coherent was the cross-collaboration between ECE subprogrammes during the Fora? What lessons can be learned?
14. How coherent were the collaboration and partnerships with UN system and other stakeholders?
15. Has the coherence (relevance, efficiency and effectiveness) of the Forum of Mayor been enhanced in 2022, following its affiliation with RFSD, in addition to CUDHLM? Would a direct link with the Commission be a coherent choice?
16. How coherent (relevance, efficiency and effectiveness) is the choice of Geneva to host the Forum of Mayors? Would it be coherent to envisage hosting by ECE member States outside of Geneva?

**Impact:**

17. How impactful have the Fora been in term of participation and visibility? What lessons can be learned?
18. How have the Fora contributed to more direct engagement of local governments on issues such as housing, urban and land governance at the regional and international levels?
19. Has the Forum of Mayors emerged as a broad and valued platform to engage Mayors and member States on practical discussions on sustainable urban development in the ECE region?

**V. Methodology**

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the ECE Evaluation Policy<sup>79</sup> and in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's revised gender-related norms and standards<sup>80</sup>.

To reinforce the impartiality of the evaluation, an Independent Evaluation Committee will oversee the evaluation process. The Committee will be comprised of three members:

- Chair of the Steering Committee of the Forum of Mayors
- Director, Forestry, Land and Housing Division (FLHD)
- Programme Officer in charge of evaluations, Programme Management Unit (PMU)

While the evaluation will be conducted by the PMU, the Independent Evaluation Committee will be involved in the following steps:

- Selection of the evaluator
- Approval of the Inception report, including proposed survey and interview questions
- Reception of the draft report
- Clearance of the final report after quality insurance

The evaluation will be conducted based on:

1. A desk review of all relevant documents, as specified below;
2. An electronic survey to be developed by the consultant to assess the perspective of the stakeholders, as specified underneath. The consultant will manage the electronic platform; the survey shall be prepared in English.
3. Selected interviews with key stakeholders, as specified underneath; the interviews will take place remotely.

The document review will consider:

- i. Mandates and terms of reference of UNECE and relevant subsidiary bodies;
- ii. Relevant EXCOM and CUDHLM decisions, formal and informal documents;
- iii. All documents referred to in the footnotes of the background section;
- iv. All documents produced for the 2019 Days of Cities, the 2020 and 2022 Forum of Mayors;
- v. Other documents as relevant.

---

<sup>79</sup> [UNECE Evaluation policy](#)

<sup>80</sup> [UNEG 2016 Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)

The survey and the interviews will target:

- i. Member States, through EXCOM delegations;
- ii. Mayors invited during the 2019 Days of Cities, the 2020 and 2022 Forum of Mayors;
- iii. Partner organizations as well as other stakeholders involved during the Fora;
- iv. ECE Management, and ECE staff involved in the Fora;
- v. Focal points from UN Secretariat entities.

UNECE will provide all support and guidance to the evaluation consultant as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation. The above-mentioned documentation will be provided by the FLHD.

Interviews with selected internal and external stakeholders will be identified through discussions between the evaluation manager (PMU) and the evaluation consultant. Contacts of the stakeholders will be provided by the FLHD.

Data collection activities and protocols should be gender sensitive and evaluators should ensure equitable participation regardless of gender, status, and other social identities. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis.

The methodology should finally comply with the OIOS COVID-19 Response Evaluation Protocol<sup>81</sup>.

## VI. Provisional Schedule for the Review<sup>82</sup>

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action</b>
23 April 2021	TOR approved by the Steering Committee
<i>Date in 2021 to be confirmed</i>	TOR approved by ECE EXCOM
<i>From EXCOM approval to selection of the evaluator</i>	Secretariat prepares background materials for the evaluation
31 December 2021	Evaluator selected by the Independent Evaluation Committee
1 February 2022	Contract signed. Evaluator starts the desk review
1 March 2022	Inception report cleared by Independent Evaluation Committee; electronic survey begins
4-5 April 2022	Evaluator attends Forum of Mayors 2022
April 2022	Evaluator conducts interviews
16 May 2022	Evaluator submits final draft report to the Independent Evaluation Committee
October 2022	Report is reviewed by CUDHLM
December 2022	Report is reviewed by EXCOM

## VII. Resources

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/evaluation/reports/detail/15890>

<sup>82</sup> Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator. The contract of the evaluator ends after the submission of the final report.

An independent consultant will be engaged for a period of 40 days to conduct the evaluation, within a budget of US\$ \$10'000 (inclusive of all costs).

An expert consultant with experience in reviewing intergovernmental fora will conduct the evaluation under the management of the PMU. The P-4 Programme Officer in PMU will manage the consultant and coordinate requests for information from FHLD and other divisions as required.

The Housing and Land Management Section will provide to the evaluator the relevant project documents, contacts of stakeholders, and explanations as required in the course of the evaluation.

### **VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps**

The results of the evaluation will be considered by CUDHLM at its 83<sup>rd</sup> session and EXCOM during 2022. Based on the results of the evaluation, EXCOM will agree on whether to extend the Forum beyond 2022 as well as on the objectives, format and frequency of the Forum.

A management response to the evaluation will be prepared by UNECE. Progress on implementation of relevant recommendations will be monitored by the PMU every six months until final closure of the recommendations. The final evaluation report, the management response and the progress on implementation of the recommendations will be available on the UNECE public website.

### **IX. Criteria for Evaluators**

Evaluators should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in evaluation
- Specialized training in areas such as evaluation, collaboration between private sector and UN entities, project management, gender analysis, human rights.
- Advanced skills in statistical research and analysis.
- Demonstrated relevant professional experience in design, management and conduct of evaluation processes with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, project planning, monitoring and management.
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.
- Demonstrated knowledge in the areas of urban development policies, urban planning and management, multilateralism and organization of international fora.
- Fluent in written and spoken English. Knowledge of another language (for example Russian or French) may be desirable for the purpose of being able to seek inputs from national authorities in their native tongue.
- Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to UNECE before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs.

## ANNEX II. FUTURE SCENARIO

### 5-point future scenario for the Forum of Mayors

(Note by the secretariat “Second Forum of Mayors: Background and Recommendations”)

#### **(a) Upgrade the format of the Forum to a recurrent event**

##### *i. Bolstering collaboration with the ECE*

- a.i.1 Strengthen the Forum’s planning and decision-making processes linked to the development of common declarations and solutions for addressing common global challenges with thematic working groups (see action point d)
- a.i.2 Formalize the Forum’s link with the CUDHLM (see action point c) and/or
- a.i.3 Formalize the Forum’s affiliation to the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (an option that was followed in 2022), and/or with the ECE Commission Session (an option that was followed in 2019 “Day of Cities”), as appropriate

##### *ii. Strengthening collaboration with ECE member States*

- a.ii.1 Organize a formal or informal event in the lead-up to, or during the Forum of Mayors to facilitate dialogues between participating mayors and State diplomats on global challenges forming the focus on the Forum’s discussions

##### *iii. Increasing the number of participating cities and articulating collaboration with city networks*

- a.iii.1 Increase the number of participating cities per country
- a.iii.2 Establish a strategy, with principles and modalities, for collaborating with regional and global city networks engaged in thematic areas and policy issues relevant to the Forum of Mayors’ agenda as set out in the Geneva Declaration of Mayors

##### *iv. Organizing a public event around the Forum*

- a.iv.1 Make the Forum of Mayors part of a major city event, aimed at facilitating the exchange of views and cross fertilization between the Forum and city networks as well as between the Forum and local stakeholders

#### **(b) Assign a precise focus for the Forum’s discussions**

- b.i.1 Define a clear and detailed focus for each Forum edition well in advance
- b.i.2 Entrust the participating cities at each Forum edition with the task of defining of the focus of the subsequent edition

#### **(c) Revise existing selection criteria for participating cities**

- c.i.1 Increase the number of participation cities to two cities per Member State, with two-year terms, elected in successive years (see section IV).

#### **(d) Strengthen the Forum’s planning and decision making**

- d.i.1 Create one thematic working group from each Forum's participating cities to prepare documents that will be approved at the Forum's meeting. The working group will convene

online inter-sessionally, as needed. Additional working groups shall be created, as appropriate, upon the request of the Forum.

- d.i.2 Issue an annual report featuring a list of local and national policies and initiatives that have been adopted as a consequence of the previous Forums' meetings in collaboration with the Geneva Cities Hub (GCH).

**(e) Establish an online platform for the Forum**

- e.i.1 Establish a partnership with the GCH with a view to formalizing the integration of the GCH Mayors' Action Platform as a communication tool for the Forum.
- e.i.2 Expand the content of this platform to include reporting of local and national policies implemented as a result of the declarations and recommendations adopted at the Forum.

## ANNEX III. CONSULTED DOCUMENTS

- UNECE Proposed programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6 Sect.20 of 22 March 2021)
- UNECE Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019 (A/71/6/Rev.1), 2017
- Resolution adopted by ECOSOC on 24 July 2019 (E/RES/2019/34 of 31 July 2019)
- GA Resolution of 25 September 2015 (A/RES/70/1)
- GA Resolution of 23 December 2016 (A/RES/71/256)
- Main directions of UNECE ongoing work on further SDG alignment, Informal Document No. 2018/12 presented to EXCOM at its 98th meeting, on 18 May 2018
- 68th Commission Session Concept note and programme outline, Informal document No. 2018/24 presented to EXCOM at its 100th meeting, on 21 September 2018
- Chair's Conclusions of 112th EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/112), 14 December 2020
- UNECE Biennial Report 28 April 2017-10 April 2019 (E/ECE/1488)
- Extrabudgetary project "Support to the organization of the Day of Cities", Informal Document No. 2019/18 presented to EXCOM at its 104th meeting, 11 March 2019
- Forum of Mayors concept note (ECE/HBP/2020/2), 27 July 2020
- Annotated provisional agenda for the CUDHLM 80th session (ECE/HBP/200), 18 June 2019
- Report of the CUDHLM 80th session (ECE/HBP/201), 22 October 2019
- Annotated provisional agenda for the CUDHLM 81st session (ECE/HBP/205), 24 July 2020
- Report of the CUDHLM 81st session (ECE/HBP/206), 11 December 2020
- Note by the Secretariat "Second Forum of Mayors: Background and Recommendations", 30 March 2022
- Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development, UNECE, 9 November 2017
- The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing
- The Geneva Declaration of Mayors
- UNECE Evaluation Policy
- UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation
- EXCOM Decisions relating to latest developments in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE/EX/2022/L.6 and ECE/EX/2022/L.7)



## ANNEX IV. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

How do you assess the relevance of the Forum of Mayors?

- How relevant have the Fora been to the Programme of Work of component (a) housing and land management of subprogramme 8 Housing, land management and population?
- How relevant have been the Fora to reflect issues of particular interest to the region and enhance sub regional cooperation?
- How relevant have the Fora been to the wider UN priorities, inter alia, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing?
- Has the Forum of Mayors emerged as a broad and valued platform to engage Mayors and member States on practical discussions on sustainable urban development in the ECE region?

What is the main added value of UNECE to organize the Forum of Mayors?

- Has the coherence of the Forum been enhanced in 2022, following its affiliation with RFSD, in addition to CUDHLM? Would a direct link with the Commission be a coherent choice?
- Do you see any added value to organize the Forum of Mayors as part of the CUDHLM, back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development or back-to-back with the Commission session?
- Have appropriate mechanisms and a formal structure been established to link the Fora to the Committee on Urban Development and other Committees? (to approve a declaration or to promote the implementation of recommendations and decisions taken at the Fora)
- How coherent was the cross-collaboration between ECE subprogrammes during the Fora? What lessons can be learned?
- How coherent were the collaboration and partnerships with UN system and other stakeholders?

To what extent did the organization of the Fora support an efficient use of resources in ECE?

- How effective was the support of the Secretariat and the Steering Committee to organize the events?
- How efficient was the support provided by ECE regular budget funded staff to organize these events?
- How coherent is the choice of Geneva to host the Forum? Should the Forum of Mayors be organized in other cities than Geneva?
- Which frequency appears the most sustainable for the Forum?

How effective were the successive formats to deliver agreed objectives?

- How do you assess the presentations? (content, use of pictures...)
- What were the final outputs delivered?
- To what extent have the Fora contributed to gender equality, disability inclusion and to an increased focus towards the most vulnerable?
- How useful is the Forum of Mayors' website?

Have the Fora provided an effective platform for the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular Mayors and cities?

- To what extent have the Fora allowed Mayors participating in the Committee intergovernmental process in their own right? (action oriented experiment to link global-national-local diplomacy)
- Is it appropriate the current limit of one participating city per country?
- How do you assess the events contribution to peer-learning and exchange of knowledge?
- How do you assess the events contribution to enhance the understanding of urban authorities / policymakers at the city level on successful examples of transition towards smart sustainable cities?
- How have the Fora contributed to more direct engagement of local governments on issues such as housing, urban and land governance at the regional and international levels?

Has discussing political matters at the Forum added to its value?

Would it be appropriate/feasible to create a thematic working group of participating cities that, during the period in between events, elaborates documents to be approved at the next Forum's meeting?

Would it be appropriate/feasible to issue an annual report featuring a list of local and national policies and initiatives adopted as a consequence of the previous Forums' meetings?

Would it be appropriate/feasible to issue a (political) declaration after the celebration of the Forum of Mayors?

Has the Forum evolved to take into account the lessons derived from previous Fora?

How sustainable is it for the Housing Unit to organize a recurrent Forum of Mayors, vis-à-vis the other deliverables included in its Programme of Work?

How impactful have the Fora been in term of participation and visibility?

- What lessons can be learned?
- What were the Forum impacts on the visibility and role of UNECE as a whole?

What would be the impact of the participation of Mayors from other regions in 2022?

- Would there be a significant impact if a global segment is included in the Forum?

## ANNEX V. LIST OF INTERVIEWS

### ***National government representatives***

Ms Doris Andoni, Chair of the CUDHLM / Member of the SC  
Mr Martin Zbinden, Representative of Switzerland to UNECE / Co-Chair of the SC  
Ms Marie-Pierre Meganck, Representative of France to UNECE / Member of the SC  
Mr Giampiero Bambagioni, CUDHLM Bureau Member / Member of the SC  
Mr Jeremy Murray, Delegate of US to UNECE / Member of the SC  
Mr Andriy Nikitov, Delegate of Ukraine to UNECE  
Mr Alexander Alimov, Delegate of Russia to UNECE  
Ms Anna Spirina, Delegate of Russia to UNECE / Former Member of the SC

### ***Mayors/City representatives***

Mr Peter Danielsson, Mayor of Helsingborg (Sweden)  
Mr Sami Kanaan, Vice Mayor of Geneva (Switzerland)  
Ms Susan Aitken, Mayor of Glasgow (UK)  
Mr Mathias De Clercq, Mayor of Ghent (Belgium)  
Mr Nicolas Gharbi, Principal Advisor for City diplomacy and international affairs, City of Madrid (Spain)

### ***UNECE secretariat***

Ms Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary  
Ms Gulnara Roll, Regional Advisor  
Ms Hana Daoudi, Secretary to the CUDHLM

### ***Other United Nations organizations***

Mr Graham Alabaster, Chief Sanitation and Waste Management, UN-Habitat  
Mr Curt Garrigan, Chief Sustainable Urban Development Section, UN ESCAP

### ***Other organizations***

Ms Anh Thu Duong, Co-director, Geneva Cities Hub  
Ms Kamelia Kemileva, Co-director, Geneva Cities Hub  
Mr Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi, Columbia University  
Ms Paloma Taltavull de la Paz, Alicante University / Chair, Real Estate Market Advisory Group  
Mr Andras Szorenyi, Consultant / Former country Representative

## ANNEX VI. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**(q1) In what type of organization do you work?**

- Local authority
- National Government, Ministry, Agency, etc.
- Permanent Mission
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Other (please specify)

**(q2) What role better describes your work?**

- Mayor or Deputy Mayor
- Senior management / policymaker
- Other (please specify)

**(q3) What is your relationship with UNECE?**

- UNECE staff / service provider
- Member of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing, land management
- Member of other Sectoral Committee / Working Party
- Mission Delegate to UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM)
- Other (please specify)

**(q4) In what region is the country you represent?**

- Caucasus
- Central Asia
- Eastern and Central Europe
- North America
- South Eastern Europe
- Western Europe
- Other (please specify)

**(q5) What is your sex?**

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

**(q6) What is your relationship with the Forum of Mayors? (select all that apply)**

- Member of the Secretariat
- Member of the Steering Committee
- Participant in the events
- Other (please specify)

**(q7) In what event(s) did you participate? (select all that apply)**

- Day of Cities (8 April 2019)  
<https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/forum-of-mayors-2019>
- First Forum of Mayors “City Action for a Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impact of Disasters and Climate Change” (6 October 2020)  
<https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/forum-of-mayors-2020>

- Second Forum of Mayors “Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing the implementation of the SDGs” (4-5 April 2022)  
<https://forumofmayors.unece.org/events/second-forum-mayors-2022>
- None

**(q8) Were you a speaker at any of the event(s)?**

- Yes
- No, I was an attendant
- No, I never attended the events

**(q9) How was your participation in the event(s)?**

- In person
- Online
- I never attended the events

**(q10) Has the event(s) allowed Mayors to participate in the Committee intergovernmental process in their own right?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g., limiting factors, etc.)**

**(q11) How effective was the support of the secretariat to organize the event(s)?**

- Highly satisfactory
- Mostly satisfactory
- Mostly unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. visibility, communication, administrative/logistic support, participation, etc.)**

**(q12) How do you assess the organization of the event(s)?**

- Highly satisfactory
- Mostly satisfactory
- Mostly unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**(q13) What is the main added value of UNECE to organize the Forum of Mayors?**

**(q14) Do you see any added value to have the Forum of Mayors as...?**

**Part of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management/back-to-back with it**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**Back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**Back-to-back with the ECE Commission session**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**(q15) Should the Forum of Mayors be organized in other cities than Geneva?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. do you think that the Forum of Mayors could be made part of a major city event?)**

**(q16) How do you assess the presentations?**

**Content**

- Highly interesting
- Mostly interesting
- Little interesting
- Not interesting
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. relevance, usefulness or replicability of the issues addressed)**

**Format**

- Highly appropriate
- Mostly appropriate
- Little appropriate
- Not appropriate
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. use of photographs)**

**(q17) Gender issues and specific needs of the most vulnerable were addressed at the event(s)...**

- Significantly
- Somehow
- Rarely
- Not at all
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**(q18) How do you assess the event(s) contribution to...?**

**Peer learning and exchange of knowledge?**

- Highly satisfactory
- Mostly satisfactory
- Mostly unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**Enhance the understanding of urban authorities / policymakers at the city level on successful examples of transition towards smart sustainable cities**

- Highly satisfactory
- Mostly satisfactory
- Mostly unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**Enhance the understanding of urban authorities / policymakers at the city level on existing UNECE instruments and tools for sustainable urban development (including measuring progress towards smart sustainable cities)**

- Highly satisfactory
- Mostly satisfactory
- Mostly unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**Strengthen cooperation at the city level to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

- Very significant
- Significant
- Rather insignificant
- Insignificant
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. is it necessary to articulate a collaboration strategy with city networks? How could it be done?)**

**(q19) How often do you think that the Forum of Mayors should be organized?**

- More than once a year
- Once a year
- Less than once a year
- Never

**Please provide concrete details if possible.**

**(q20) Is the current limit of one participating city per country appropriate?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g., number of cities per country, duration of the term, etc.)**

**(q21) To both put into practice the principle of the Geneva Declaration of Mayors and learn from it, would it be appropriate/feasible to...?**

**Create a thematic working group of participating cities that, during the period in between events, elaborates documents to be approved at the next Forum's meeting**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. composition, working methodology, meeting regularity, etc.)**

**Issue an annual report featuring a list of local and national policies and initiatives adopted as a consequence of the previous Forums' meetings**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. working methodology, partnerships, etc.)**

**Issue a (political) declaration after the celebration of the Forum of Mayors?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. feasibility, approval mechanism, etc.)**

**(q22) How useful is the Forum of Mayors' website? (<https://forumofmayors.unece.org>)**

- Very useful
- Useful but with some limitations
- Slightly useful due to important flaws
- Not useful
- Do not know

**Please provide concrete details if possible (e.g. have you ever used any of the examples included in the section 'Good Practices from the Geneva Declaration of Mayors'?)**

**(q23) Has discussing political matters at the Forum added to its value?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**Please provide details if possible.**

**(q24) Please provide any comments or recommendations you may wish.**



## ANNEX VII. MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

### Forum of Mayors 2020

#### *Committee Bureau members*

Ms. Joana Balsemão, Portugal, Co-Chair Mr. Edouard Jay, Switzerland, Co-Chair Ms. Doris Andoni, Albania

Mr. Dmitry Doroshevich, Belarus

Ms. Marie-Pierre Meganck on behalf of Mr. Yves Laurent Sapoval, France Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni, Italy

Mr. Olzhas Sartayev, Kazakhstan

Ms. Beatriz Corredor, Spain

Ms. Anna Spirina, Russian Federation

#### *Representatives of the Canton of Geneva*

Mr. Olivier Coutau, Canton de Genève

#### *Representatives of other organizations*

Ms. Kamelia Kemieva, Geneva Cities Hub

#### *Representatives of the UNECE Nexus on “Sustainable and Smart Cities for All Ages”*

Mr. Tony Bonnici, Coordinator of the UNECE Nexus “Sustainable Smart Cities for all Ages Nexus”

Mr. Anders Jonsson, Chief, UNECE Innovation Section

Ms. Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

Ms. Franziska Hirsch, Secretary to the UNECE Convention on Industrial Accidents Mr. Scott Foster, Director, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division

Mr. Roel Janssens, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE Transport Division

## **Forum of Mayors 2022**

### ***Representatives of UNECE member States***

Mr. Martin Zhbinden, Steering Committee Co-Chair (Switzerland)  
Ms. Joana Balsemão, Steering Committee Co-Chair and Member of the CUDHLM Bureau, Councillor, City of Cascais (Portugal)  
H.E. Mr. Andras Szorenyi, former Ambassador of Hungary to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva  
Ms. Doris Andoni, Chair of the CUDHLM (Albania)  
Ms. Marie Pierre Meganck, Member of the CUDHLM Bureau (France)  
Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni, Member of the CUDHLM Bureau (Italy)  
Mr. Olzhas Sartaev, Member of the CUDHLM Bureau (Kazakhstan)  
Ms. Helena Beunza, Member of the CUDHLM Bureau (Spain)  
Mr. Jeremy Murray, Economic Officer, Multilateral Economic and Political Affairs United States Mission to the UN  
Ms. Paloma Taltavull de la Paz, Chair of UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group (Spain)

### ***Representatives of other organizations***

Ms. Kamelia Kemieva and Ahn Thu, Co-Directors, Geneva City Hub  
Mr. Richard Dilworth, Norman Foster Foundation  
Mr. Dr Graham Alabaster, Head of Geneva Office (OIC), UN-Habitat  
Mr. Pietro Elisei, ISOCARP President Elect

### ***Representatives of the UNECE secretariat***

Ms. Paola Deda, Director, Forests, Housing and Land Management Division  
Ms. Gulnara Roll, Regional Advisor, Forests, Housing and Land Management Division  
Ms. Hana Daoudi, Secretary to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management  
Mr. Scott Foster, Sustainable Energy Division  
Mr. Tony Bonnici, Coordinator, UNECE Sustainable Smart City Nexus for all Ages; Economic Affairs Officer, Partnerships and Cooperation Section  
Mr. Batyr Hajiyev, Environment Division  
Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski, Regional Advisor, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division  
Mr. Roel Jansson, Secretary, Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics WP.5  
Mr. Anders Jonsson, Chief, UNECE Innovation Section  
Ms. Fulvia Donata Montresor, UNECE Road Safety Fund