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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Panel on urban planning for climate-neutral and circular homes and cities

San Marino Declaration

Note by the Bureau of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

Summary

This note contains the “San Marino Declaration on principles for sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture in support of sustainable, safe, healthy, socially inclusive, climate-neutral and circular homes, urban infrastructure and cities”. The Declaration was developed by the Bureau of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management with the support of the secretariat to contribute to the realization of the vision of the United Nations Secretary-General of “a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system, anchored within the United Nations”.¹ The Declaration also responds to the call of the President of the General Assembly Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanization, stressing that “implementing the New Urban Agenda requires ... the large scale mobilization of millions of architects, planners, surveyors and valuers, and real estate professionals”.²

This document contains the San Marino Declaration amended and adopted by the Committee during its eighty-third session.

¹ *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations publication, 2021). Available at <https://unfoundation.org/our-common-agenda>.

² First Meeting of the President of the General Assembly’s Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanization, 2 December 2021. Available at <https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2021/12/PAGAs-Advisory-Committee-on-Sustainable-Urbanization-Meeting-Summary.pdf>.



1. We, the participants at the eighty-third session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, assembled on 3-6 October 2022 in San Marino, with a dedicated focus on addressing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of housing, land management and urban development, commit to bolstering the roles of architects, engineers, surveyors, urban planners and designers in ensuring sustainable, safe, healthy, socially inclusive, climate-neutral and encouraging circularity in homes, urban infrastructure and cities.

2. In this regard, we *recall*:

(a) The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of September 2015 *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* which stresses the need for a comprehensive, people-centred approach so as to leave no one behind and ensure policy coherence across all the integrated and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 11 aimed at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

(b) The United Nations *New Urban Agenda*, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), on 20 October 2016, in Quito, Ecuador and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth plenary meeting of the seventy-first session, on 23 December 2016, with a view to providing a universal action-oriented framework for mobilizing Member States and other stakeholders to drive sustainable urban development at the local level, the implementation of which contributes to the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner and to the achievement of all the SDGs, including Goal 11 and its associated targets;

(c) The *Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing*, endorsed by ECE on 16 April 2015, to support governments in their efforts to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all through effective policies and actions at the national, regional and international levels, supported by international cooperation;

(d) The *Place and Life in the ECE - A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes*, adopted by ECE on 6 October 2021 to contribute to making housing in the ECE region more affordable, decent, safe, accessible and climate-neutral and to integrating housing policies into urban development policies and initiatives;

(e) The report of the United Nations Secretary-General, entitled *Our Common Agenda* of 10 September 2021 which provides a forward-looking vision of the future of global cooperation with 90 action-oriented proposals for reinvigorating inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism; and the subsequent General Assembly resolution *Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Our Common Agenda"* (A/RES/76/6) of November 2021, which requested the United Nations Secretary-General to engage Member States, the United Nations and development partners in further consultations on the report's proposals.

3. We also *recognize* that, by 2050, an estimated 68 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas, and that North America (about 83 per cent) and Europe (75 per cent) are among the most urbanized regions.³

4. With this in mind, we *concur* that:

(a) Sustainable and inclusive urbanization require creative solutions for ensuring that homes, buildings, urban infrastructures and cities become increasingly more sustainable, safe, healthy, socially inclusive, culturally sensitive, climate-neutral and circular.

(b) Urban design and architecture, by virtue of shaping homes, buildings, urban infrastructures and cities, should become an integral part of the much-needed creative solutions for sustainable and inclusive urbanization and for addressing development challenges caused by population growth and demographic shifts.

³ United Nations, "Population Dynamics", World Population Prospects 2019. Available at <https://population.un.org/wpp> (accessed on 30 March 2022).

(c) Mayors and civic leaders, architects, engineers, urban planners, designers, surveyors, and building managers, the creative driving force of urban transformation, hold the key to a more sustainable and inclusive urban future.

5. We, therefore, invite city mayors, architects, engineers, urban planners, designers, surveyors, building and city managers, developers and infrastructure operators around the world to:

(a) *Commit* to translating the San Marino Declaration into action through signing the below integrated and indivisible Principles;

(b) *Engage* to promote the Declaration and its Principles through their work and networks, including in support of related national legislation, as appropriate;

6. We also *agree* that every city, urban infrastructure and building should be designed in line with the following integrated and indivisible “Principles for Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Design and Architecture”:

(a) *People-centrality, social responsibility and inclusivity*: Urban planning, design and architecture need to foster and support social responsibility and integrate diversity and equality through due consideration of the needs of individuals and households across all races, age groups, gender, cultures, abilities and income levels, including intergenerational planning.

(b) *Cultural identity, values and heritage*: Urban planning, design and architecture should respect the identity and cultural heritage of places and buildings as well as the cultural values and traditions of communities.

(c) *Resource efficiency and circularity*: Every city, urban infrastructure and building should be designed in a way that limits the use of energy, uses only sustainable energy sources, reuses rainwater and limits the use of other natural resources and reduces resource losses. In addition, every city, urban infrastructure and building should, to the extent possible, by design: use recycled materials; reuse and requalify spaces; reduce the production of waste reuse water; and encourage food production through urban agriculture, orchards and food forests.

(d) *Safety and health*: Every city, urban infrastructure and building should be based on internationally recognised quality standards as well as safety standards for workers and citizens, including fire safety.⁴ Homes should provide a comfortable, safe and healthy living space, while cities and urban spaces should be designed with the imperatives of ensuring the safety and health of citizens; providing safe and sustainable mobility systems, including rail, road, inland waterways as well as walking and meeting spaces, green areas and urban forests that are accessible to all. Port cities need to ensure that port facilities are up to international transport and safety standards.

(e) *Respect for nature and natural systems and processes*: Every city, urban infrastructure and building should be designed in a way that limits its impact on the ecosystem of surrounding spaces, including by respecting plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and natural habitats. This implies conducting *ex-ante* environmental impact assessments, allowing spaces for biodiversity and using natural materials as well as low impact production assembling and dismantling processes.

(f) *Climate neutrality*: Cities, urban infrastructure and buildings should be designed and requalified to minimize the associated climate footprint, by adopting creative solutions that reduce pollution and energy use; phase out unsustainable mobility systems; use modern, energy-efficient, climate-neutral systems; and integrate green energy generation systems in city designs and buildings.

(g) *People-smartness*: Technology and smart information and communications technology solutions should be used to improve liveability, including the most socially disadvantaged, bolster transparency and curb corruption.

⁴ https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/documents/Standards/UNECE_International_Fire_Safety_Standards_October_2020.pdf.

(h) *Resilience, durability, functionality and foresight:* City and architectural design should support solutions that make homes, buildings and urban spaces resilient to natural disasters, especially those caused by climate change, including hurricanes, droughts and wildfires, flooding and high winds; and making buildings and infrastructures durable and flexible, incorporating spatial adaptability to accommodate new conditions and usages over time.

(i) *Affordability and accessibility:* Cities and homes need to be affordable and accessible to all citizens. Designers need to keep this factor in mind and design high-quality environments for meeting the needs of all citizens.

(j) *Inter-disciplinary cooperation and networking:* Cities and urban spaces should be designed to foster cohabitation, community engagement, solidarity and social cohesion taking into account the needs of citizens across all races, age groups, gender, cultures, abilities and income levels;

(k) *Engagement:* Consultation with and participation of the local communities is essential for any urban project, including small, medium and large-scale projects. Continuous engagement with various stakeholders, including longitudinal research, will foster trust, ensure responsiveness to the needs of all citizens, and consolidate shared ownership of the city's future.
