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**Economic Commission for Europe****Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management****Working Party on Land Administration****Thirteenth session**

Geneva, Switzerland, 4-5 April 2023

**Report of the thirteenth session of the Working Party on  
Land Administration****I. Introduction**

1. The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) held its thirteenth session in Geneva on 4-5 April 2023. The session was in person only; a UNTV recording of the session can be found [here](#). All presentations and statements delivered during the session are available online at <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/events/wpla-13thsession>.

**A. Attendance**

2. Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) countries participated: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following organizations of the United Nations system attended: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

4. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: Alliance Creative Community Project, EuroGeographics, European Land Registry Association (ELRA), Génération Maastricht, Global Land Alliance, International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI), International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), Peace by Prosperity and Roma Active Albania.

5. Private sector representatives, experts and academics from universities and research institutions also attended the session.

**B. Adoption of the agenda**

6. The Chair of the Working Party, Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, Sweden, opened the session. In his remarks, the Chair highlighted the importance of capitalizing on the accelerated digitalization of the land administration sector and strengthening the interplay between land administration, land use planning/urban development and spatial data infrastructures.

7. Ms. Paola Deda, Director, Forests, Land and Housing Division, ECE, welcomed the participants to the meeting. In her remarks, Ms. Deda highlighted the importance of further digitalization of the land administration sector, which will contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. The Working Party adopted the session provisional agenda without changes as contained in ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/1.

## **II. Matters arising from the eighty-second and eighty-third sessions of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management**

9. The secretariat informed delegates on key decisions of the eighty-second and eighty-third sessions of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM); and on the decisions of the 112th session of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of ECE which established the Forum of Mayors as a subsidiary body of the CUDHLM in the form of a Team of Specialists.

10. The Working Party took note of the decisions taken by the CUDHLM at its eighty-second (ECE/HBP/208) and eighty-third (ECE/HBP/213) sessions as well as the decisions by EXCOM on the establishment of the Forum of Mayors.

## **III. Review of the programmes of work 2020-2021 and 2022-2023: Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing**

11. The Chair informed delegates on the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/3), which included capacity-building activities, land administration reviews and studies on selected topics in land management.

### **A. Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing:**

#### **Reports on outcomes of the webinar series**

12. Representatives of Finland, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom presented information on the webinars on land administration conducted in 2021-2022. Details on the workshops are available in ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/4. Based on the webinar discussions, it was concluded that in the future programme of work, WPLA should (1) move from the further development of international guidelines to supporting the practical implementation of the existing ones; (2) encourage education and capacity-building of professionals to help them in the application of modern innovative information technologies; and (3) support land administration organizations in making the services more accessible to non-experts; (4) encourage application of socioeconomic impact assessment of geospatial systems using the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF).

#### **Improvement of informal settlements**

13. The agenda item on improvement of informal settlements included an expert presentation on the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region and available Working Party capacity-building resources to support member States in improvement of informal settlements. The presentation underlined the importance of an evidence-based approach for the development of cohesive, effective policies for the improvement of informal settlements. The presentation was followed by interventions by representatives of the governments of Albania and Uzbekistan on their governments' efforts to improve informal settlements. Representatives of UN-Habitat and FAO provided comments and proposals on how United Nations agencies could support the efforts of

governments. The representative of UN-Habitat encouraged ECE member States to promote the use of city-wide land management strategies and stronger community engagement in the improvement of informal settlements.

## B. Land administration reviews

14. The agenda item on land administration reviews included presentations of national reviews that are being undertaken as part of the ECE Country Profiles on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, including the ongoing land administration review of Albania and the preparation for the development of the land administration review of Montenegro. The Government of Uzbekistan submitted a request for a land administration review in October 2022, which was agreed to by the CUDHLM.

15. A representative of Armenia requested the development of the second ECE Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management for his country.

## C. Studies on selected topics in land administration and land management

16. The Working Party was informed about outcomes of two studies on land administration and management which aim at helping land administrations and relevant State agencies to better formulate targeted and effective policies:

(a) **“Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond,”** developed jointly with FAO and the FIG. The presentation highlighted the importance of moving the land administration systems from focusing on conventional key performance indicators to a broader perspective on outcomes and social impact and demonstration of the contribution of land administration to country priorities and to land-related SDGs.

(b) **“Sustainable development and security of property rights in the UNECE region: An assessment of perceived tenure security for land and housing,”** developed jointly with the Global Land Alliance and the Overseas Development Institute. This presentation highlighted: the importance of developing country-specific studies on security of property rights based on assessment of specific situations for each country to provide more tailored recommendations, including on ways to support property rights of vulnerable groups.

17. The Working Party took note of:

(a) Outcomes of the thematic workshops and webinars on land administration conducted in 2021-2022

(b) Capacity-building activities on the improvement of informal settlements and support for implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region

(c) The status of the land administration review of Albania, which is being prepared as part of the Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Albania

(d) Planning for the land administration review of Montenegro to be prepared as part of the Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Montenegro

(e) The request of the Government of Armenia to develop a country profile

(f) The request of the Government of Uzbekistan to develop a country profile

(g) The proposals of the Bureau for the organization of thematic seminars and workshops in 2023-2024 to facilitate sharing experiences and best practices among countries in the ECE region based on content of the published reports “Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond” and “Sustainable development and security of property rights in the UNECE region: An assessment of perceived tenure security for land and housing”.

#### IV. Keynote segment: Ecosystems and security in land administration

18. The Chair presented the draft report on ecosystems and security for land administration arrangements - major themes for the Working Party on Land Administration in the coming two-year term (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/5). As societies become more complex, interdisciplinary solutions are increasingly important and land administration actors and functions need to perform coherently through a systemic approach. The representative of FIG informed delegates about FIG experiences with the development of Geospatial Information Ecosystems. The presenters stressed the importance of an integrated approach to Geospatial Information Ecosystems and their development as well as the need to build the capacity of land administration professionals to ensure that they are equipped to address the rapidly changing social and economic environment and changing requirements of the profession. The representative of Cyprus presented experiences on the digital transformation of the national land administration system in his country, with a specific focus on security issues. He highlighted cyberattack risks linked to digitalization and noted the choice between security and speed of restoration of services that land administration organizations must address.

19. Presentations were followed by a panel discussion on Geospatial Information Ecosystems and Digital Transformation. Representatives of Armenia, Finland, Georgia, Norway, and Spain, as well as FAO and Global Land Alliance, shared their organizations' experiences for the improvement of land administration systems vis-à-vis megatrends, including digitalization, climate change and others. Panellists underlined the importance of promoting digitalization of land and property data: it is crucial for the functioning of the economy, attracting investors and implementing reconstruction efforts after man-made and natural disasters. Panellists also identified the following challenges to the further development of the land administration systems:

- Ensuring the security of digital data and information
- Fostering cooperation between registries, cadastres, municipalities, urban planners and the geospatial community to ensure integrated approaches to land administration and management
- Provision of access to data and information to the public and stakeholders based on the "legitimate interest" in the data and according to internationally recognized principles
- Expanding the range of the data included in registries to complement the traditionally collected geographical and property information, for instance, with information on environmental quality (e.g., pollution of land), climate neutrality (level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or energy-efficiency level of buildings).

20. Following the panel discussion, an interactive survey was undertaken with participants in the meeting; its results will be analysed after the session by the Bureau and will inform further activities on future scenarios in land administration.

21. The Working Party:

(a) Took note of the information provided and requested its Bureau to develop: (i) a study on ecosystems in land administration; and (ii) a study on security in land administration; and requested a report on progress made on those studies at its fourteenth session in 2025

(b) Endorsed the thematic report on "Ecosystems and security for future land administration arrangements," and requested the Bureau to address additional comments received during and immediately after the session and to present the final thematic report at the eighty-fourth session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in October 2023

(c) Approved the above-mentioned thematic report as an official publication in English and Russian, digital and print format.

## **V. Collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe Real Estate Market Advisory Group on Climate-Neutral, Energy-Efficient and Sustainable Buildings and Cities**

22. This segment discussed avenues for strengthening collaboration between the Working Party and the ECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group on Climate-Neutral, Energy-Efficient and Sustainable Buildings and Cities (REM).

23. The Working Party took note of the REM activities as per the REM 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 work plans and proposals from WPLA delegates for future joint activities. This includes the topic of strengthening the collaboration between land administration authorities, urban planners and local authorities on land use planning; and that of data security and public access to data.

## **VI. Presentation of the programme of work for 2024–2025**

24. The Chair presented the draft programme of work for 2024-2025 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/6).

25. This segment also included presentations by WPLA partner organizations, including ELRA, EuroGeographics, FAO, FIG and UN-Habitat on their activities and proposals for cooperation with WPLA.

26. The Working Party reviewed and adopted its programme of work for 2024-2025 (see annex) and recommended it be submitted to the Committee for endorsement at its eighty-fourth session in October 2023.

## **VII. Review of the terms of reference for 2025-2030**

27. The Chair presented the proposed terms of reference for the Working Party on Land Administration 2025-2030 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/7).

28. The Working Party reviewed and adopted its draft terms of reference for the period of 2025-2030 and recommended the renewal of its mandate to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at its eighty-fourth session in October 2023.

29. The Working Party invited the Committee to approve terms of reference of the Working Party for the period 2025-2030 and to transmit them to EXCOM together with the renewal of the Working Party's mandate for final approval.

## **VIII. Election of the Bureau**

30. The Working Party elected its Bureau members, including a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, for a two-year term.

31. The following Bureau members were elected:

- Ms. Victoria Abbott, United Kingdom (Chair)
- Ms. Kirsikka Riekkinen, Finland (Vice-Chair)
- Ms. Pilar Verdejo García, Spain (Vice-Chair)
- Mr. Filippo Cadamuro, Italy
- Ms. Chryssy A. Potsiou, Greece.

## **IX. Any other business**

32. No matters were raised under this item.

## **X. Date of the next session**

33. The Chair informed delegates that the next session is scheduled to take place in spring 2025. He also invited member States to consider hosting the next Working Party session in their country.

## **XI. Adoption of the report**

34. The Working Party reviewed and adopted the session report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat.

35. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 16:25.

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## Annex

### **Programme of Work of the Working Party on Land Administration of the Economic Commission for Europe for 2024-2025**

#### **I. Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing**

1. Objective: To increase the capacity of member States of the ECE to formulate policies on land administration and management.
2. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
  - (a) Organize four workshops in the ECE region, in person and/or online, to allow for experience- and knowledge-sharing on best practices for improving land administration and management
  - (b) Promote the work of the Working Party and provide advice on land administration at workshops, conferences, webinars, and other events focusing on land administration and management, as well as through relevant United Nations channels
  - (c) Provide policy advice to national and local governments on best practices for strengthening land administration resilience
  - (d) Contribute, as requested, to the discussions of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and the ECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group for Sustainable, Climate-Neutral and Energy-Efficient Buildings and Cities
  - (e) Contribute, as requested, to the work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, including the United Nations Expert Group on Land Administration and Management, in line with Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/2016/27) on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management.<sup>1</sup>

#### **II. Land administration reviews**

3. Objective: To provide, upon the request of member States, national assessments of land administration arrangements as well as best recommendations to further develop those arrangements.
4. To achieve that objective, the Working Party will, upon invitation by Governments and subject to the availability of funding and capacity to carry out the work, develop national land administration reviews as part of the ECE country profiles on urban development, housing and land management.

#### **III. Studies on selected topics in land administration and management**

5. Objective: To study issues of interest to member States in the area of land administration and develop publications to help member States formulate more targeted and effective policies, strategies, and action plans for further developing their land administration and management systems.
6. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
  - (a) Develop a study on ecosystems in land administration, which provides concise analysis of the different actors and functions involved and recommendations for holistic, fit-

<sup>1</sup> [https://ggim.un.org/documents/E\\_Res\\_2016-27\\_en.pdf](https://ggim.un.org/documents/E_Res_2016-27_en.pdf)

for-purpose land administration and land management arrangements. The study will draw on the ECE *Scenario Study on Future Land Administration in the UNECE Region*<sup>2</sup> and publication *Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond*, developed jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG).<sup>3</sup> It will take into account the current global megatrends, including urbanization, digitalization and climate change, and their implications for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. The study will also consider open data principles and data-driven solutions and practices for supporting domain approximation between land administration, land management and geospatial information systems.

- (b) Develop a study on security in land administration, covering critical aspects related to, among others, cyber and data security, protection of personal integrity and national security. The study will draw on the ECE-FAO-FIG joint publication *Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond* and the ECE *Scenario Study on Future Land Administration in the UNECE Region*.
- (c) Continue the work on benchmarking of land administration systems.
- (d) Develop possible additional studies on land administration resilience.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/scenario-study-future-land-administration-unece-region>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unece.org/publications/housing-and-land-management>