



Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management****Eighty-fourth session**

Geneva, 4-6 October 2023

Report of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management on its eighty-fourth session**I. Introduction**

1. The Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) held its eighty-fourth session in Geneva from 4 to 6 October 2023. The meeting was held in person only. It was streamed live on UN Web TV.

II. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following non-ECE Member States attended: India, Japan, Jordan, Qatar.

4. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat).

5. Representatives of local and regional authorities from the ECE region, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), the private sector, academics from universities and research institutions, and independent experts also attended the meeting.

III. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Documentation: Annotated provisional agenda for the eighty-fourth session (ECE/HBP/218)



6. The Chair of the Committee presented the provisional agenda that was prepared in consultation with the Committee Bureau. The agenda was adopted.
7. The Executive Secretary of ECE, and the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat then made opening statements to the Committee.
8. The Executive Secretary of ECE highlighted the importance of Committee instruments such as the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing to support efforts of Governments in the ECE region to promote decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing. She also stressed the importance of Committee activities to support urban resilience as well as multilevel cooperation through the Third Forum of Mayors.
9. The Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat informed the Committee about the UN-Habitat work on the themes of localization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), urban resilience and climate change, housing and land. He informed the Committee of the establishment of the first global intergovernmental expert working group championing adequate housing. In paragraph 6 of the Second Habitat resolution on Adequate Housing for All, the Assembly invites the United Nations Regional Commissions to contribute to the activities of the Working Group; he invited the Committee to contribute to the Working Group.

IV. Report on the outcomes of the Third Forum of Mayors and related recommendations

Documentation: Draft recommendations on urban regeneration from the third Forum of Mayors (ECE/HBP/2023/1)

10. The Co-Director of the Global Cities Hub, on behalf of the Chair of the Bureau of the Forum of Mayors, informed the Committee of the discussions held at the Third Forum of Mayors (Geneva, 2-3 October 2023) and the Forum recommendations to the Committee.¹ She also informed the Committee of the request from the delegation of Italy for the establishment of a dedicated “platform” on gender as part of the next Forum to allow further discussion of that matter.
11. Greece added that collaboration between cities is important, as well as cooperation through networks and with international organizations.
12. The Committee:
 - (a) Took note of the information provided about the Forum of Mayors by the Forum Chair;
 - (b) Endorsed the recommendations of the Forum of Mayors;
 - (c) Requested the secretariat to organize surveys of mayors and participants who attended the First, Second and Third forums on the format and possible topics of the Forum of Mayors to be held in 2024.

V. Follow-up to the adoption of the San Marino Declaration on principles for sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture

Documentation: 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 (ECE/HBP/2022/2)

¹ Please see details on the Third Forum of Mayors at its web page: <https://forumofmayors.unece.org/>

13. Delegates were informed of activities which support the implementation of the San Marino Declaration, which was adopted by the Committee at its eighty-third session.²

14. The Vice-President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA Europe) and Director of the ISOCARP Institute, informed the Committee on best practices in urban planning and national urban policies. He highlighted that the latter should be flexible in focussing on current challenges and crises (e.g., energy, finance, climate).

15. A representative of the University of Geneva spoke about sustainable and inclusive design in Geneva bringing case studies of “Retrofitting Projects: Small Lake” (Jet d’eau) and “Jardin Anglais” (access to Jet d’eau for those with reduced mobility), and the Plage des Eaux-Vives. He highlighted the importance of incorporating participatory methods throughout the entire project life cycle, encompassing co-defining the problem, co-designing the solution, and co-implementing the project from its initial conception. This approach is crucial for preventing prolonged and expensive cycles of revision.

16. A representative of the University of Geneva and Chair of the “Naming the World” programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) noted that female invisibility and underrepresentation in urban spaces, including street addresses, signage and maps, is a major educational issue, as well as a matter of urban management. He spoke about naming public spaces as a tool for cities to achieve gender inclusion. This includes the idea of creating an inventory of eligible female personalities for street, monument or other place names.

17. The Committee was encouraged to formulate recommendations for activities under the 2024 programme to support sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture in the ECE region.

18. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the information provided about the follow-up to the adoption of the San Marino Declaration;
- (b) Requested the Bureau to formulate recommendations for activities under the Committee’s 2024 programme of work, subject to availability of funding, to support sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture in the ECE region.

VI. Update on the implementation of 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’

Documentation: “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” (ECE/HBP/215)

19. A representative of the Glasgow School of Art reiterated the themes of the Regional Action Plan, and mentioned how countries, cities and other stakeholders could achieve affordable decent housing in an urban context.

20. The panel focused on sharing experiences and best practices in implementing the Regional Action Plan in their respective countries, cities and communities.

21. The Deputy Minister for Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia, highlighted the vital role of urban spatial planning and emphasized that a swift, equitable and inclusive green transition is needed, through the promotion of household photovoltaics and the creation of new green jobs. All efforts should be further enhanced through technological literacy education.

² <https://unece.org/isu/documents/2022/12/post-session-documents/san-marino-declaration>

22. A representative of the Federal Office for Housing, Switzerland, addressed housing shortages in cities, emphasizing multilevel cooperation for compact, walkable urban development and affordability improvements, despite limited public housing.
23. The Director, Housing Policy and Urban Development Department, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia, discussed the new national housing strategy, which focused on ensuring accessible and affordable housing. Key measures involved supporting housing stock refurbishment, boosting social housing construction, renovating existing homes, enacting new legislation, and adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to engage all stakeholders, thereby empowering cities and towns to play an active role in this endeavour.
24. A representative of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, United States of America, discussed the new Green and Resilient Retrofit Programme (GRRP), highlighting that the largest portion is dedicated to housing investments for low-income residents through loan and grant programmes. He mentioned a newly launched initiative to allocate 40 per cent of specific federal investment benefits to communities labelled as "disadvantaged".
25. The Chair of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) Steering Committee presented THE PEP, a programme jointly established by the World Health Organization (WHO) and ECE to promote healthy and environmentally friendly transportation. She explained that it covers various areas like active mobility, the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), eco-driving, sustainable tourism and mobility, among others, and contributes to multiple SDGs.
26. A representative of Tbilisi City Government, Georgia, presented information on the city's housing and homelessness programme. He explained that the programme also aims to improve the quality of life for beneficiary families through training and other initiatives, to replace dilapidated residential buildings with sustainable, energy-efficient ones, ensuring high safety standards, maintaining healthy urban areas and increasing real estate value.
27. A representative of the Chisinau city government, Republic of Moldova, introduced plans for the development of an urban planning system named GIS-LOCAL; the system will be based on the use of the Geographical Information System and aims to provide swift decision-making information for municipal management.
28. A representative from the Estonian Union of Cooperative Housing Associations, Tallinn, Estonia, presented the national 3D e-construction platform containing digital information on building stock. The platform allows the city to efficiently organize refurbishment of buildings, including residential ones. To disseminate information on Estonian experiences in refurbishing buildings using digital tools, the Union partnered with three cities in Ukraine and provides support to them in rebuilding efforts.
29. The Secretary to the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics, Sustainable Transport Division, ECE, discussed urban mobility challenges. He emphasized the importance of human-centred mobility, rethinking urban planning and mobility principles to either avoid, shift, or improve transportation. He advocated for the "avoid, shift, or improve" approach to transportation, emphasizing urban planning as the key; shifting from polluting to sustainable transportation modes like walking, cycling, and public transport; and improving fuel efficiency through electric vehicle adoption, all while considering affordability, safety, and accessibility as critical dimensions.
30. The Head of the Human Settlements Unit of ECLAC highlighted ECLAC's experiences in supporting cities to achieve the SDGs and economic resilience. He emphasized the economic opportunities associated with housing retrofit in the region and the importance of changing the narrative to effectively transform urban dynamics.
31. The Committee:
- (a) Took note of the activities that supported the implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2030;
 - (b) Agreed, subject to availability of funding, to conduct a survey of ECE member States on "Improving Housing Affordability and Climate-Neutrality in the ECE region" (as a follow up to the survey of 2020-2021);

- (c) Invited other ECE initiatives addressing urban planning and housing to align themselves with the “Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030” and provide regular updates on the implementation to the Committee.

VII. Matters arising since the last Committee session

Documentation: Economic Commission for Europe Biennial Report (20 April 2021-18 April 2023) (E/ECE/1503)

32. Delegates were informed of recent developments in ECE and other United Nations organizations which will have an impact on the work of the Committee and will need to be considered in planning the implementation of the Committee programmes of work for 2023 and 2024. The Secretary of the Committee briefed delegates about the outcomes of the ECE Commission session (Geneva, 18-19 April 2023); the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE Region (Geneva, 29-30 March 2023);³ and ECE engagement in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, 10-19 July 2023). She also informed delegates about the preparations for the participation in the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, COP28) (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 30 November-12 December 2023).⁴

33. The Chief of the Sustainable Urban Development Section, Environment and Development Division of ESCAP presented to delegates information on the planning of the Eighth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-8) convened by ESCAP (Suwon City, South Korea, 22-26 October 2023).

34. A representative of the UN-Habitat Geneva Office informed the Committee of the outcomes of the Second United Nations Habitat Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya, 5-9 June 2023)⁵ and informed delegates of the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12) (Cairo, November 2024) and the possible engagement of the Committee in WUF12 events.

35. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the outcomes of the ECE Commission session, including of its high-level segment “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe”;
- (b) Invited the Committee Bureau to develop concrete proposals on the approaches to enhance the impact of the Committee and instruments of its subsidiary bodies to foster digital and green transformations in the ECE region;
- (c) Took note of the outcomes of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE Region; the Second United Nations Habitat Assembly; and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
- (d) Took note of the information on the organization of the APUF-8; and of ECE participation in the 2023 UNFCCC, COP28; and the WUF12.

VIII. Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2022 and 2023

Documentation: Draft programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022 (ECE/HBP/2021/9)

Draft programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2023 (ECE/HBP/2022/9)

³ <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2023>

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/cop28>

⁵ <https://unhabitat.org/events/second-un-habitat-assembly>

Activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eighty-third session (ECE/HBP/2023/2)

36. The Committee reviewed the implementation of the 2022 and 2023 programmes of work as detailed under subitems 6 (a)-6 (h).

(a) Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative

Documentation: Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Podgorica, Montenegro (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 1)

Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Almaty, Kazakhstan (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 2)

37. The First Deputy-Mayor of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, discussed building upon the recommendations of the ECE *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan* and said the city had committed to becoming a green city by 2026. That included plans to upgrade and formalize informal settlements, developing green public spaces, a transition from coal to natural gas as an energy source and an upgrade of its transportation fleet.

38. The representative of Podgorica, Montenegro, provided information on key outcomes and recommendations of the draft *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Podgorica, Montenegro*. He emphasized the need for specific interventions in data collection and analysis for urban management. Among thematic priorities for the future, he highlighted the topics of urban mobility, housing and building renovations, waste management and energy efficiency.

39. The Chair of the Board of the Almaty Development Centre, Kazakhstan, spoke about key outcomes and recommendations of the draft *Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Almaty, Kazakhstan*. He emphasized the need for specific interventions in urban mobility, housing and building renovations, and waste management.

40. The Committee was briefed on recommendations for the way forward for the ECE engagement in the topic of smart sustainable cities and in the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative.

41. In that regard, a representative of the University of Piraeus, Greece, and UNESCO Chair in "Creative Cities in Motion" informed the Committee about digital transformation and security challenges for smart, sustainable and creative cities. Challenges include regulatory constraints, geographical disparities, the digital divide, interoperability, connectivity and data/privacy security. He stressed the importance of a robust legal framework to address protection gaps arising from new communication services.

42. The Chief Executive Officer at Special Economic Zone "Park of Innovative Technologies" from Almaty, Kazakhstan, spoke about the importance of having collaborated with the ECE to develop the Smart Sustainable Cities Profile for Astana and acknowledged that the development of the city profile helped to develop strategic development programmes for the city. Moving on, he commented on the situation from the perspective of the private sector. He emphasized the importance of addressing infrastructure challenges and pledged support from the information technology community in Almaty.

43. A representative of ESCWA discussed the U4SSC activities and experiences in supporting smart sustainable cities in the ESCWA region. She emphasized the importance of urban data in city transformations. She highlighted that ESCWA is at the frontline in exploring the connections between smart services and gender equality as well as the empowerment of women in the Arab region, particularly through initiatives promoting accessible and secure transportation to enhance women's economic opportunities. She announced the establishment of an interactive simulation centre designed to assist cities and urban planners in testing policies that facilitated a net-zero and smart transition.

44. A representative from the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security stressed Italy's dedication to implementing and localizing the 2030 Agenda SDGs. To that end, Italy is working with metropolitan areas.

45. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the information provided on the U4SSC initiative activities;

- (b) Welcomed the development of Smart Sustainable Cities Profiles for the cities of Almaty, Kazakhstan, and Podgorica, Montenegro;
- (c) Approved the profiles as official publications in English and Russian, digital and print formats.

(b) Building urban resilience through action plans, nature-based solutions, innovative and green financing

Documentation: COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/214)

Principles for Green Financing for Sustainable Real Estate, Infrastructure and Urban Transformation Projects (ECE/HBP/2023/3)

Informal Network of Experts on Urban Nature (ECE/HBP/2023/4)

46. The secretariat briefed delegates on:

- (a) Outcomes of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) “rapid response” project “Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19”⁶ and results of the project evaluation;⁷
- (b) Urban action work by the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), including the urban trees and forests work, the Trees in Cities Challenge,⁸ the Informal Network on Urban Nature,⁹ forests for food in cities (NaturEatTown (NET)), as well as low carbon buildings;
- (c) ECE instruments to support cities in the use of innovative and green financial instruments for urban recovery.¹⁰

47. A representative of the ECA briefed the Committee on outcomes of the joint side event “Supporting cities in urban resilience-building for inclusive responses and recovery from natural, man-made disasters, internal and external shocks” and on next steps in the cooperation of the Regional Commissions to promote urban resilience. The new project will be implemented by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat in 2024-2026. The target countries and cities are Ecuador (Quito), India (Coimbatore), Lebanon (Beirut), Montenegro (Podgorica) and Zimbabwe (Harare).

48. The Chief of the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, Forests, Land and Housing Division spoke about the positive impact of trees on cities and the initiatives of ECE to further support member States and cities to promote urban resilience.

49. The Vice-Chair of the Committee from Italy presented the “Principles for Green Financing for Sustainable Real Estate, Infrastructure and Urban Transformation Projects”, elaborated by the Bureau of the Committee to develop further guidance to cities on green financing.

50. A representative of UN-Habitat stressed the importance of promoting inclusive urban regeneration, a sustainable planning process supporting the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, yielding benefits like improved mobility, local economic development and community cohesion. He referenced initiatives involving technical support and capacity development, including Equity Park in Mexico and the Socioeconomic Strategy for Riyadh.

51. A member of the Congress Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe,

⁶ <https://treesincities.unece.org/informal-network-experts-sustainable-urban-forestry>

⁷ Evaluation brief of the project is under the [link](#)

⁸ <https://treesincities.unece.org/>

⁹ <https://treesincities.unece.org/informal-network-experts-sustainable-urban-forestry>

¹⁰ Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance Smart Sustainable Cities projects, <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/368918>; and Compendium of Practices on Innovative Financing for Smart Sustainable Cities Projects, <https://www.itu.int/en/publications/Documents/tsb/2023-U4SSC-Compendium-Practices-Innovative-Financing-SSC-Projects/index.html#p=1>

presented the new European Urban Charter III of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to be adopted in October 2023. The new Charter serves as a framework for local and regional governments to build urban resilience.

52. A representative of Italy expressed support for the Principles for Green Financing.

53. The Committee:

- (a) Welcomed the secretariat's work in support of building urban resilience and sustainability, and invited the secretariat to continue this work as part of the future project "Supporting member States in urban economic resilience-building for inclusive responses and recovery regarding natural, man-made disasters, climate change, internal and external shocks";
- (b) Took note of the urban action work of COFFI and agreed to engage in activities of the Informal Network on Urban Nature managed by the ECE Forestry and Timber Section, given the existing synergies with COFFI in the areas of greening cities and urban forests;
- (c) Endorsed the "Principles for Green Financing for Sustainable Real Estate, Infrastructure and Urban Transformation Projects";
- (d) Took note of tools developed by the United Nations (including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UN-Habitat and others) to support building urban resilience and invited member States and cities to apply them.

(c) Voluntary Local Reviews: measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level

Documentation: Guidelines for the development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/2022/6)

54. The secretariat updated the Committee on the testing of the Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in the ECE region through the implementation of related projects, and on the development of an online training programme on VLRs.¹¹

55. Representatives of the University of Geneva presented the preliminary outcomes of the testing of the Regional Guidelines for the Development of VLRs in the ECE region. They said that the university helps ECE in three core areas: "stress testing" indicators for cities, the creation of city profiles and the evolution of the ECE Regional Guidelines on VLRs with a more practical component. They shared the following recommendations for more effective VLRs: the development of easy, flexible online interfaces, the promotion of data cultures at the micro level, assisting cities and countries in drafting data-sharing policies to cooperate with the private sector and adapting the VLR framework for small- and medium-sized cities.

56. The Head of the Smart and Sustainable Cities Unit, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) briefed delegates on the OECD's work on VLRs. He said that according to the estimates, the majority of cities and regions are not achieving the SDGs. Some regions lag in terms of climate, energy, coastal protection, biodiversity, industry/innovation, while cities are particularly behind in terms of climate, biodiversity and health. Unfortunately, both cities and regions lag behind on gender-related targets.

57. A representative of UN-Habitat, Chair of the Local2030 Coalition, informed the Committee of the Local2030 Coalition initiatives and opportunities for support of the localization of the SDGs in ECE member States. Local2030 supports local leaders in collaboratively incubating and sharing solutions, unlocking bottlenecks and implementing strategies that advance the SDGs at the local level. UN-Habitat is co-chairing the initiative with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Spain and Italy are two main funders of the initiative.

¹¹ Support to the development of the online portal was provided by the project "Improved sustainable urban development in Norwegian cities", <https://unece.org/housing/norwegian-project>. The project evaluation report is available at https://unece.org/evaluation-reports#accordion_9 under Housing, Land Management and Population

58. The Committee:

- (a) Welcomed the activities of the secretariat on the testing of the Regional Guidelines in pilot cities, the organization of capacity-building activities and the development of an online training module;
- (b) Took note of activities of the Local2030 Initiative and activities of the OECD in SDGs localization;
- (c) Invited the secretariat to update the Guidelines based on outcomes of their testing in pilot cities and on the feedback to be received from the pilot cities, relevant experts and stakeholders, UN-Habitat, other United Nations agencies and partner organizations.

(d) Activities of the network of the Geneva UN Charter Centres for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities

59. The Committee was informed of the activities of the network of eight Centres of Excellence¹² which support the Committee in the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and the “Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030”.

60. An interactive panel was organized by the network of the Geneva UN Charter Centres for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities¹³ in cooperation with the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for Sustainable, Climate-Neutral and Energy-Efficient Buildings and Cities (REM), with a focus on the current and potential future key challenges in the housing sector.

61. Under this agenda item participants also heard from a panel of experts. The Director General, Urban Agenda and Architecture, Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, Madrid, Spain, presented the new Spanish Urban Agenda, a national strategy aligned with the 2030 Agenda, United Nations Urban Agenda, and European Union Urban Agenda to promote sustainable urban development, advocating for housing affordability, accessibility and aesthetic quality. She focused on two strategic objectives of its national urban agenda, namely, housing, and urban rehabilitation and regeneration.

62. The Research Director, Housing Europe, Brussels, Belgium, informed the Committee about key results of a report launched in June 2023 “The State of Housing in Europe 2023: Social housing between a fair energy transition and dealing with crisis”. She discussed the triple challenge of affordability, sustainability and availability of housing. She noted that construction and renovation costs and increased interest rates have led to backlogs in social housing availability.

63. The Director, Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), Habitat for Humanity International, Europe and Middle East Area Office, discussed housing challenges in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. He mentioned a project, Empty Spaces to Homes, which repurposes local government-owned buildings for affordable social housing solutions.

64. An Executive Board Member, Initiative Wohnungswirtschaft Osteuropa (IWO), Germany, emphasized the need for improving existing housing stock, training of managers of multifamily buildings and using sustainable materials. The EU's building stock consumes a significant portion of energy and produces CO₂ emissions, requiring substantial refurbishment funds. However, a shortage of skilled construction workers necessitated innovations like use of prefabricated materials.

65. A representative from the Institute for Habitat Development (Co-Plan), Polis University, Tirana, Albania, discussed the vital connection between affordable, climate-resilient housing and equitable urban development.

66. Following the panel, questions were raised by an NGO representative, an independent expert and a representative from Denmark. Panellists discussed what made housing

¹² <https://unece.org/housing/charter-centres>

¹³ <https://unece.org/housing/charter-centres>

“affordable”, solutions for rising energy costs, and affordable housing challenges for first-time buyers, providing the examples of Albania, Germany, Poland and Spain.

67. The Committee:

- (a) Welcomed the activities of the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence that supported the Committee in the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and the Regional Action Plan 2030;
- (b) Reiterated the central role of the Centres of Excellence in the implementation of the programmes of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme;
- (c) Invited the Centres of Excellence to continue their activities, in coordination with the secretariat, in line with relevant ECE guidance documents.

(e) Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for Sustainable, Climate-Neutral and Energy-Efficient Buildings and Cities

Documentation: Programme of Work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for 2023-2024 (ECE/HBP/2022/8)

68. The Chair of the REM presented a report on the activities of the Advisory Group to the Committee and explained how those REM activities will support the Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) in the implementation of their work programmes.

69. A representative of the International Fire Safety Standards Coalition updated delegates on activities of the coalition and implementation of the ECE International Fire Safety Standards.¹⁴

70. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the report on the REM activities since the eighty-third Committee session;
- (b) Welcomed the activities of the REM in the implementation of the programmes of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme.

(f) Affordable, carbon-neutral and energy-efficient housing in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: "#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region" (ECE/HBP/204)

Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency for 2024-2025 (ECE/ENERGY/2023/10)

71. The Director of the ECE Sustainable Energy Division informed delegates on the activities of the ECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency and the ECE Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency in Buildings.

72. The Programme Management Officer of the Secretariat of the Global Alliance for Building and Construction (GlobalABC) informed the Committee of its activities. The GlobalABC is involved in developing global and regional roadmaps and producing status reports for the building and construction sector. The alliance aims to advocate, encourage action and provide support to national and local governments and the private sector. He highlighted the need for decarbonization efforts in the building sector.

73. The president and CEO of the Green Building Alliance gave an update on activities of the organization. The alliance aims to unite stakeholders and implement projects like the 2030 district model to reduce CO₂ emissions in the existing built environment. They have 23

¹⁴ <https://unece.org/housing/standards>

districts in North America. The alliance activities include technical assistance, education, workforce training and project implementation.

74. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the activities and outcomes of the work of the Joint Task Force since the Committee's eighty-third session and advised the Committee on participation in the work of the Joint Task Force for the period 2024-2025;
- (b) Endorsed the "Terms of Reference of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings for 2024-2025" and agreed to extend the mandate of the Joint Task Force until 2025;
- (c) Invited member States and other stakeholders to provide financial and in-kind support for activities of the Task Force.

(g) Land administration and management

Documentation: Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Land Administration for the period 2025-2030 (ECE/HBP/2023/5)

Draft programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration 2024-2025 (ECE/HBP/2023/6)

Ecosystems and security for future land administration arrangements (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 3)

75. The Head of External Affairs and WPLA Chair informed the Committee about activities carried out since its eighty-third session, outcomes of the thirteenth session of the WPLA (Geneva, 4-5 April 2023)¹⁵ and the Working Party's future activities.

76. A representative of Mainz University and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) informed the Committee on key findings of the publication of "Digital transformation and land administration—Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond" developed jointly with the FAO and FIG and on the WPLA presentation at the FIG Forum (28 May-1 June 2023) "Trends and Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem".

77. The Chair of the Working Party spoke on planning future activities. She emphasized that discussions at the WPLA workshops and the 13th session. It was concluded that the Working Party should in future: move from the further development of international guidelines to supporting the practical implementation of the existing ones; encourage education and capacity-building of professionals to help them in the application of modern innovative information technologies; support land administration organizations in making the services more accessible to non-experts; and encourage application of socioeconomic impact assessment of geospatial systems using the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF).

78. A representative of the National Technical University of Athens and WPLA Bureau member, Greece, informed the Committee of the WPLA activities supporting implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region, including the online training programme and webinars.

79. A representative of the city of Madrid, Spain, and WPLA Bureau member reported on progress with the organization of the ECE workshop "Ensuring tenure security during reconstruction after natural and man-made disasters" to be held in Madrid on 2 and 3 November 2023. An objective is to share experiences and good practices from countries of the ECE region and beyond in reconstruction after natural and man-made disasters. The workshop will focus on the topic of securing land and housing tenure, especially on the legal, geospatial and economic aspects.

80. The Chief of Section, Land, Housing and Shelter and Secretary to the Global Land Tool Network of UN-Habitat informed the Committee of the objectives and main priorities of the Network.

¹⁵ <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/events/wpla-13thsession>

81. The Committee:
- (a) Noted with appreciation the activities of the WPLA, including the organization of its thirteenth session;
 - (b) Welcomed the thematic report on “Ecosystems and security for future land administration arrangements”, prepared by the Working Party;
 - (c) Approved the report as an official publication in English and Russian, digital and print format;
 - (d) Approved the extension of the mandate of the Working Party until 2030 and requested this be transmitted to EXCOM for final approval;
 - (e) Endorsed the Working Party programme of work for 2024-2025.

(h) Country profiles on urban development, housing and land management

Documentation: Draft country profile on urban development, housing and land management of Albania (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 4)

Assessment of the national housing policy of Montenegro (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 5)

82. The secretariat informed the Committee about the recent development of and additional requests to develop country profiles.

83. A representative of Cardiff University and ECE expert presented key conclusions and policy recommendations of the Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Albania. The key recommendations are related to strengthening the role of housing policy at the national level, including through increasing the capacity of the National Housing Agency and consolidating the fragmented responsibilities of different institutions; and developing a national strategy for urbanization and urban regeneration, ensuring improvements in the liveability of settlements through refurbishment of buildings.

84. A representative from the municipality of Elbosan, Albania—one of the two pilot cities presented in the profile—highlighted the importance of the country profile in consolidating the available data, which is useful to support an evidence-based approach for municipal management.

85. A representative of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro informed the Committee about the planning of the Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Montenegro. The ECE expert informed delegates of conclusions of a preliminary assessment of the Montenegro housing policy conducted in 2022-2023 based on the request of the Government in the preparation of the Country Profile.

86. Following the request received from the Government Uzbekistan in April 2023 to conduct its second Country Profile, a delegate from Uzbekistan updated the Committee on key priorities for the development of the second Country Profile of Uzbekistan. An independent expert (Italy) provided his assessment on the possible content of the Country Profile to be developed by ECE.

87. The Chairman of the Urban Development Committee of Armenia informed delegates of the request submitted to the Committee for the development of the second Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Armenia.

88. The Committee:
- (a) Welcomed the finalization of the draft country profile on urban development, housing, and land management of Albania;
 - (b) Approved the profile as an official publication in English, digital and print formats;
 - (c) Took note of the outcomes of the assessment of the national housing policies of Montenegro and the status of the country profile;
 - (d) Took note of the request of the Governments of Uzbekistan and Armenia to

develop country profiles.

IX. Update on technical cooperation

Documentation: Activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eighty-third session (ECE/HBP/2023/2)

89. The Secretary to the CUDHLM introduced the UN4UkrainianCities project.
90. Following the introduction, a representative of UN-Habitat informed the Committee of its ongoing and planned activities in support of the reconstruction of cities and communities in Ukraine. He underlined that UN-Habitat works closely with the ECE UN4UkrainianCities project.
91. The Deputy Minister of Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine highlighted the significant losses in the residential sector due to the war, emphasized the importance of modern approaches to housing and urban planning and expressed gratitude for the international support received. She also mentioned a ministerial working group that supports the updating of housing policies, trying to align them with the Geneva Charter to meet the housing needs of its citizens.
92. A Senior Housing consultant at ECE provided information on the legislative reform in Ukraine for affordable housing. He highlighted the importance of consultations and public discussions for shaping the new housing policy and noted the aim of affordable housing options for all citizens. The focus included socially affordable housing, funds and financial mechanisms, drawing from European best practices while streamlining regulations.
93. An Executive Board Member of the Initiative Wohnungswirtschaft Osteuropa (IWO), Germany, presented how IWO is supporting Ukraine. He emphasized that in Ukraine, with 50 per cent of the population residing in energy inefficient multifamily units, revitalizing existing stock is a priority. He emphasized that German-Ukraine cooperation would involve city-to-city partnerships, mutual assistance among municipal housing companies and close coordination between experts focusing especially on municipal rental housing.
94. An Associate Professor at De Montfort University, United Kingdom, informed the Committee of the planned activities regarding the Ukrainian urban cadastre. He emphasized that the Ukrainian Government has embraced online tools for housing compensation. The Ministry aims to connect local and national levels via the urban cadastre. He highlighted that the complexity of property rights, while safeguarding individual rights, is crucial. Reconstruction efforts in Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Borodianka involve plans and investment projects, including workshops, expert support groups, knowledge-sharing, urban development tools, local staff capacity-building and travel funding for urban forums.
95. The Russian Federation exercised their right of reply to indicate their disagreement with some of the content of the presentations and requested that the Committee pursue topics more closely related to sustainable urban development.
96. The representatives of the United States and the European Union expressed their disagreement with the intervention of the Russian Federation and reiterated their support for Ukraine.
97. The Director General for International Relations, General Coordination of the Mayor's Office, City of Madrid, Spain, explained that the city is formally engaged with ECE on the UN4Ukrainiancities, under a project titled "Building capacities of ECE member States for integrated urban planning". The project will facilitate urban cadastre knowledge exchange, focusing on developing concrete regulations and guidelines on urban cadastre. Madrid had been considered a reference on the subject.
98. The project will involve at least three workshops and an online toolbox to collect best practices. Cadastre plays a major role in protecting property rights and preventing land ownership disputes. It also assists cities in planning infrastructure projects efficiently.
99. A Senior Urban Economy consultant at ECE highlighted the significance of the UN4Ukrainian cities project, focusing on Kharkiv's Master Plan. She explained that the

project involves citizen input, local expertise and international collaboration to develop precise solutions for five pilot projects and comprehensive urban strategies. These initiatives aim to address various urban challenges, promote sustainable development and attract financing from international financial institutions. This project not only supports post-war recovery, but also facilitates long-term urban development in Ukrainian cities.

100. Architects representing Norman Foster Foundation presented a vision for the Kharkiv Master Plan and planned activities within the project.

101. The Chairman of the Mykolaiv City Council explained that over 45 per cent of the city's infrastructure has suffered damage or destruction as a result of the conflict. He expressed gratitude to ECE and relevant partners for their support.

102. The representative of the Russian Federation raised a point of order on issues being discussed at the meeting.

103. The Programme Manager, One Works, Italy, presented the Mykolaiv Master Plan and planned activities within the project.

104. The representative of Germany said it appreciated the initiative to prepare for the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities, viewing it as a blueprint for similar initiatives in other Ukrainian cities.

105. A consultant at ECE presented the Municipal Investment Tracker. He explained that this geoinformation tool supports matchmaking between cities, projects and investors, offering the public insight into project development and funding allocation, fostering global investment in Ukraine's recovery. He announced the UN4ukrainiancities.org web page.

106. The Advisor to the Mayor of Borodianka, Ukraine, and the Architect, Principal of PCA Architecture presented the "Upgrade4Borodianka" initiative, comprising five projects: an agrotechno park, residential zone, airport (with a cargo terminal), a "medical city" and a memorial park. They sought partners and expertise for implementation.

107. The Project Manager of Irpin Reconstruction Summit emphasized the significance of city-to-city partnerships. He explained that, while currently reliant on the existing Master Plan, Irpin aims to create a new framework for its renewal. They were looking for investment and support from ECE member States.

108. The Chief Executive Officer of SLK Capital highlighted that the Municipal Investment Tracker will allow partners to see possible financial risks before contributing funds and will permit donors to assess partnership possibilities.

109. The Director of the ECE Forests, Land and Housing Division concluded the session on the UN4UkrainianCities project by emphasizing the importance of city-centric approaches, collaboration with cities and master plans that encompass various aspects of urban life. She highlighted that plans for Mykolaiv and Kharkiv are actionable, and coordination among partners is crucial to avoid duplication. She invited investment and financial support.

110. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the activities under the UN4UkrainianCities project and advised accordingly;
- (b) Expressed appreciation to the Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation of Germany and to GIZ for funding of and support to the project;
- (c) Expressed appreciation to the City of Madrid for the support of the project;
- (d) Invited other governments and interested organizations to provide funding to the ECE work supporting urban planning and recovery in Ukrainian cities.

X. Programmes of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2024 and recommendations on key components of the programme of work for 2025

Documentation: Activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eighty-third session (ECE/HBP/2023/2)

Draft programme of work of the Housing and Land Management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2024 (ECE/HBP/2023/7)

Planning of official publications and promotional materials for 2025 of the Housing and Land Management Component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme (ECE/HBP/2023/8)

Outline of key components of the programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2025 (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf.6)

111. The secretariat presented the programme of work for 2024, an outline of key components of this programme and a proposal for official publications and promotional materials for 2025.

112. The representative of Italy expressed appreciation for ECE's housing and land management programmes of work. They also appreciated the integration of SDG 13 (Climate action) into urban actions for both adaptation and mitigation, namely the Trees in Cities Challenge.

113. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the information on the activities implemented by the Committee under its programmes of work 2022 and 2023;
- (b) Adopted the draft programme of work 2024 and recommended it be sent to EXCOM for approval;
- (c) Approved the detailed list of activities proposed to implement the 2024 programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme, as presented in ECE/HBP/2023/2;
- (d) Reviewed the key components of the work programme of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2025 and provided the agreed recommendations on those components, including the modifications proposed by the secretariat;
- (e) Approved the proposal for official publications and promotional materials of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2025.

XI. Election of the Bureau

114. The Committee elected by vote the following Bureau members, including its Chair and two Vice-chairs.

- (a) The following members will hold office until the end of the eighty-sixth session.¹⁶

Ms. Stephanie Furer, Switzerland (Chair)

Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni, Italy (Vice-Chair)

Ms. Veronika Rehakova, Slovakia (Vice-Chair)

¹⁶ Nominated in 2023 for a two-year period.

Mr. Jan Schneider, Czech Republic

Mr. Tiit Terik, Estonia

Mr. Olzhas Sartayev, Kazakhstan

Ms. Andrijana Andreeva, North Macedonia

Mr. Ihor Terekhov, Ukraine

(b) The following members will hold office until the end of the eighty-fifth session.¹⁷

Mr. Regis Farret, France

Mr. Tassos Kriekoukis, Greece

115. Ms. Victoria Abbott, as WPLA Chair, will be part of the Bureau, ex officio.

XII. Other business

116. The Chair reminded delegates of the need for financial support for the activities of the Committee.

XIII. Adoption of the report

117. The Committee reviewed a draft report prepared by the secretariat. The report was adopted.

118. The Chair announced the expected dates for the next Committee session, 2-4 October 2024.

119. The secretariat expressed its deep gratitude to the current Chair and other outgoing Bureau members of the Committee and to Ms. Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the Committee, for the extraordinary work they contributed to the CUDHLM programme.

120. The Chair closed the eighty-fourth session.

¹⁷ Nominated in 2022 for a two-year period.

Annex

Third Forum of Mayors Summary of the Chair

1. The Third Forum of Mayors of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) took place on 2 and 3 October in Geneva, under the theme “Urban regeneration towards 2030”. The Forum brought together about 300 participants from cities and Member States from across the ECE region and beyond, from all United Nations Regional Commissions and specialized organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and academia. It was opened by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, (UNOG), the Executive Secretary of ECE and the Advocate of the Forum, Lord Norman Foster.

2. Out of the 60 city representatives present, 41 city leaders shared their experiences in urban regeneration and resilience, finding solutions that simultaneously meet the needs and aspirations of their residents, hedge against disasters and rise to the climate change challenge in a manner that supports the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These valuable experiences were conveyed through a series of roundtable discussions organized into four distinct thematic segments:

- A first interregional segment, which included the participation of mayors from other regions;
- A second segment focusing on projects for urban regeneration;
- A third segment on regeneration towards sustainable and resilient urban environments;
- A fourth and final segment addressing the localization of SDGs and urban regeneration.

3. During the two days of the Forum, it was recognized that cities are often more ambitious than nations when it comes to plans for the future, specifically in regard to sustainability, climate-neutrality and inclusivity. Further, it was frequently mentioned that city authorities were often best placed to act rapidly in response to crises and emergencies with stronger community relationships and strong local knowledge when it comes to targeted interventions. All of them expressed their desire to see increased city-to-city cooperation, in particular to share best practices.

4. In spite of the great diversity of the cities participating in the Forum, they share common challenges. These included:

- Combating climate change which increases the frequency of extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts and heatwaves;
- Ensuring a smooth energy transition and promoting energy-efficient buildings, and public transport;
- Revitalizing deprived areas in cities;
- Fighting pollution;
- Limiting the negative impacts of the privatization of land;
- Providing adequate and affordable housing and upgrading informal settlements;
- Preparing their cities for future shocks, including disasters, pandemics, mass migration influx, etc.; and
- Addressing the lack of municipal resources.

5. Cities highlighted that resilience, often embedded within their ambitious plans, extends beyond physical infrastructure. It encompasses the capacity of communities to adapt, recover and thrive in the face of change. By prioritizing both the well-being of residents and the preservation of the environment, mayors acknowledge that a resilient urban environment

is one that not only withstands external pressures but also nurtures the mental and physical wellness of its inhabitants, fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

6. Many innovative solutions were presented during the Forum. Some embraced nature-based solutions (like the greening of public space to reduce urban heat or the creation of infrastructure to absorb excess water and avoid flooding in urban centres), the establishment of clean air zones and the strict regulation of public transportation prices, locally subsidized social housing and policies limiting the share of income that can be used to pay for rent; while others mentioned the creation of positive energy areas, smart technologies to save energy or the establishment of municipal assemblies to engage the residents and ensure participation in various city initiatives.

7. City leaders noted the importance of international organizations' contributions to their projects, reiterating that partnerships are key to achieve sustainable urban regeneration and development and to mobilize resources to that effect.

8. At the end of the Forum, recommendations on urban regeneration were approved by the Forum of Mayors and have been transmitted to this Committee for its consideration and adoption during its current session.

9. Allow me to draw attention to the recommendations from Mayors which are specifically addressed to this Committee. The full and official version of the recommendations is contained in document ECE/HBP/2023/1.

- Mayors invite Member States to endorse the Principles of Urban Regeneration and develop legislation and policies on urban regeneration to support the principles. In particular, States are invited to support the commitment to regenerate deteriorating areas, infrastructure or facilities in cities with relevant financial and legal tools, including national tax exemptions and dedicated financial packages.
- Mayors invite the Member States to support the establishment of city-to-city partnerships to cooperate in urban regeneration projects, in particular assisting cities undergoing major crises in their renewal efforts.
- Mayors invite Member States to involve cities and facilitate their participation in relevant UN processes, to foster a renewed and inclusive multilateralism.

10. After the approval of the recommendations by the Forum, Italy made a request for a dedicated discussion/platform on gender issues at the next Forum of Mayors and this was welcomed by the Forum. The proposal is herewith submitted to this Committee for its consideration.

11. Finally, the Forum elected its new Bureau to prepare the Fourth edition of the Forum. It was agreed by consensus that the mayors of the cities of Skopje, Braga and Glasgow would become members of the Bureau, with Skopje becoming the Chair and Braga and Glasgow becoming the Vice-chairs. It was also decided that the mayor of Geneva would remain as an ex-officio and observer of the Bureau, to continue to provide support in logistical matters, in its capacity as host city.
