

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Report of the Meeting of the Bureau of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA)

31 March 2020

10:00 – 12:00 (CET)

webex

Attendance:

Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist (Sweden), Chair
Ms. Kirsikka Riekkinen (Finland), Vice-chair
Ms. Chryssy Potsiou, (Greece), Vice-chair
Ms. Mari Khardziani (Georgia)
Mr. Filippo Cadamuro (Italy)
Mr. Konstantin Litvintcev (Russian Federation)
Ms. Galina Kirichenko (Russian Federation)
Mr. Gil Matoses (Spain)
Ms. Victoria Abbott (United Kingdom)

UNECE Secretariat

Ms. Gulnara Roll
Ms. Maike Salize

Item 1: Opening and adoption of the agenda

1.1 The Chair of the Working Party, Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, opened the meeting and invited the bureau to make any amendments to the previous bureau meeting minutes and then to the agenda. No additional comments were made.

Item 2: Programme of Work 2018-2019, Programme of Work 2020-2021 and including the work of Task Groups and status on actions

Capacity-building and international knowledge sharing:

- 2.1.1 The conference on NSDI: Towards Digital Society to be held in Baku 2-4 April 2020 has been postponed due to the global situation of the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). New dates are to be decided.
- 2.1.2 The conference “International and Indigenous Perspectives for Sustainable Land Governance” in 19 May 2020 – Canada (Mont Tremblant) has been cancelled due to the global situation of the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

- 2.1.3 The Annual Meeting 2020 of FIG-Commission 7 is planned for 30 August-5 September 2020 in Bern, Switzerland. The Chair reported that two sessions with WPLA involvement are planned jointly with FIG-Commission 7: 1. Future Scenarios in LA; and 2. PPP in LA.
- 2.1.4 The workshop in Sweden on Education for LA has been moved to spring 2021 (tentatively late February/beginning of March 2021). It will be organized in the context of a Master Programme on Land Administration to be launched in autumn at the University of Gävle, Sweden. Given the current situation, the workshop might also cover practices for online education. As it is unclear for how long countries will uphold their measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, this workshop might be held as a virtual meeting.

Land administration reviews:

- 2.2.1 The next Country Profiles (CPs) on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management will be for Albania and Kyrgyzstan. Preparation of the profiles require extrabudgetary funding which still needs to be raised. This is why there is no agreed date yet when the work of the CPs will start. The research and drafting of the Land Administration chapters for CP Albania and Kyrgyzstan will need to be coordinated by the WPLA bureau. Ms. Chryssy Potsiou has expressed interest in participating. The secretariat informed the Bureau that planning for the CP Albania has been delayed because of two emergencies, namely the Earth quake in January 2020 and the COVID-19 recovery. The secretariat will keep the Bureau informed.

Task Groups: Discussions on activities for the task groups for the Programme of Work 2018-2019 & Programme of Work 2020-2021

- 2.3.1 Benchmarking of LA systems: The 'Survey on costs for registration and transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region' has been finalized. A new cover according to the ECE publication template as well as a table of contents has been added and the report made available on the UNECE Housing and Land Management website.
- 2.3.2 Fraud in Land Administration: Ms. Victoria Abbott reported that no best practices from member States have been received yet in order to complete the recommendations. She will draft an email to request the case studies and will send it to the secretariat for dissemination to WPLA focal points. The Bureau agreed to keep on hold disseminating the request until the COVID-19 situation has improved to allow for focal points to prepare case studies.
- 2.3.3 Informal settlements: The FIG Working Week where the Guidelines were planned to be launched has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. It is currently being explored to organize the launch virtually, hosted by UNECE. This would allow to reach a broader audience and invite different

speakers for presenting case studies. Tentatively, the launch could take place in mid-June. Ms. Chryssy Potsiou will reach out to FIG as FIG might be interested in participating in this virtual event and promote it among its network.

2.3.4 Land consolidation: FAO is still in the process of finalizing the Guide. An event at FIG Working Week to present and discuss the Guide had been planned. The secretariat will follow up with FAO since the FIG Working Week was cancelled.

2.3.5 Scenarios for future land administration and management: Given the uncertainty in planning due to the COVID-19 situation, it was proposed to explore the option of holding the consultation with relevant stakeholders as a virtual meeting. Concerns were raised that the dynamics of a virtual meeting might not allow for the same level of interactive dialogue.

During a follow-up call of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the secretariat, it was therefore suggested to hold the consultations during a WPLA event at the Annual Meeting 2020 of FIG-Commission 7 in August/September 2020, should this meeting take place physically. Alternatively, a virtual meeting could perhaps be organized during the second half of 2020 should the current COVID-19 situation continue. Depending on the timing of the consultations, the findings could be presented at the 81st Committee Session in October 2020 and the final report be launched during the 12th Session in March 2021.

2.3.6 Outreach and promotion: A communication survey to be sent to focal points is ready. The Bureau agreed to keep it on hold during the current situation. It was further suggested to add a question on virtual meetings reflecting the current situation on COVID-19.

Programme of Work 2020-2021:

2.4.1 Update on the survey of *Potential benefits and limitations of emerging technologies Forum* will be covered at the next Bureau meeting.

2.4.2 Ms. Chryssy Potsiou an update on Prindex. The Prindex group has published its 2019 report, which includes only the United Kingdom from among the ECE region. Prindex shared a list of prospective countries to be included in the next report. This list includes a number of ECE member states, among them Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Croatia. Prindex proposed the idea to prepare together with WPLA a report covering the ECE region. This could be followed by individual country reports and specific country as well as awareness raising activities. As a next step, it was agreed that Ms. Potsiou requests available Prindex country reports from ECE member states and share the Guidelines for the Formalization of informal constructions.

- 2.4.3 Ms. Kirsikka Riekkinen updated the Bureau on the preparations of the PPPs for LA study. The Task Force had been formed jointly with the FIG Commission 7 and includes 12 members. Daniel Paez, Chair of FIG Commission 7, will act as secretary to the group. The Terms of References have been prepared. Due to the COVID-19 situation, some changes to the work programme will need to be agreed. A workshop planned for the FIG Working Week will no longer be part of FIG and needs to be postponed. A new date will be determined in consultation with the Task Force.

The group has formulated a questionnaire to be circulated to WPLA focal points and FIG on how PPP is used in LA and what kind of objectives are intended to be achieved through PPPs. As for other planned WPLA surveys and questionnaires, it was agreed to keep it on hold for the moment as there is the understanding that WPLA focal points will not be in the position to dedicate time to respond to it.

Item 3: The 12th Session of the WPLA

- 3.1.1 During a meeting with the secretariat, Malta re-confirmed its interest to host the 12th Session of the WPLA in March 2021. Dates have yet to be determined. The secretariat is liaising with Malta on the host country agreement and logistics. The back-up plan is to have the 12th session at the Palais des Nations in March 2021.
- 3.1.2 The Bureau started discussing possible topics for the 12th session. These could include: PPP for LA, future scenarios in LA, blockchain and electronic IDs, land accessibility for island states. The Bureau was invited to communicate proposals for topics to the Chair, Vice-Chairs and the secretariat.

Item 4: Upcoming events and WPLA participation

- 4.1 List of events:
- 26-27 March 2020 – Identify and promote the environmental value of the rural land training session, Cherbourg, France
 - CANCELLED: 20-22 April 2020 - Sixth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM, Windsor, United Kingdom
 - CANCELLED: 10-14 May 2020 - FIG 2020 Working Week – Amsterdam
 - CANCELLED: 19-22 May 2020 - International and Indigenous Perspectives on Land Governance – (Mont Tremblant) Quebec, Canada
 - 30 August-5 September 2020 - Annual Meeting 2020 of FIG-Commission 7 – Bern, Switzerland
 - August/September 2020 (tbc) - Consultation on future scenarios study, possibly during Annual Meeting 2020 of FIG-Commission 7 – Bern, Switzerland

- 7-11 September 2020 – Fourth Regional workshop on IGIF - Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- 5 October 2020 – SDG11 Day – Geneva
- 6 October 2020 - Forum of Mayors - Geneva
- 7-8 October 2020 – 81st Session of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management – Geneva
- End of February / early March 2021 - Workshop on education on land administration - Sweden
- March 2021 - WPLA 12th Session – Malta

Item 5: Other business

- 5.1 The secretariat informed the Bureau about related activities regarding housing affordability and the Forum of Mayors planned for 6 October in Geneva. On the request of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM), a study on “Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE region” is currently under development. It will explore the following four topics: i. Housing governance and regulation; ii. Access to finance and funding; iii. Access and availability of land for housing construction; and iv. Climate-neutral housing construction and renovation. There are several links to the work of WPLA, including availability of land for affordable housing. The latter will be an issue of discussion during a virtual workshop planned for May 2020. The objective is to finalize the study in summer 2021 and develop a declaration on affordable housing for adoption at the Ministerial Meeting in October 2021.

WPLA members were explicitly invited to contribute to the preparation of the study. They were should inform the secretariat if they would like to e.g., i. contribute to and/or review one or more chapters of the study; ii. nominate/recommend a WPLA member or expert(s) to contribute to / review the study; and/or iii. join the steering board committee overseeing the preparation of the study.

The secretariat also updated the Bureau on the preparations for Fourth Regional workshop on IGIF, including on informal settlements and housing affordability that is planned jointly with the WPLA Bureau members Ms. Elena Busch and Mr. Bakytbek Djusupbekov in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in September. Other WPLA members are invited to contribute. Ms. Chryssy Potsiou expressed her interest in participating virtually.

The secretariat further invited Bureau representatives to present their organization’s activities on SDG11 Day – a Meeting of UN partners and international organizations working on implementing SDG11 taking place in the margins of the 81st session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in October in Geneva.

- 5.2 Update of the list of WPLA contact points. The secretariat will circulate the list of WPLA contact points to the Bureau and request to review and update it by 17 April.

Item 6: Next Bureau meeting

- 6.1 The next bureau meeting will be held by WebEx and the secretariat will send out a poll to decide on the date.