



**Sustainable Land Management Week:  
Working Party on Land Administration Workshop:  
The challenges of Informal Settlements**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2015  
Palais des Nations, Room IX, Geneva**



## **Introduction**

Over the last 25 years, informal settlements have become an increasingly pressing and urgent challenge in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). In some cases this began in the early 1990s as result of political and economic changes in Eastern Europe and former-Soviet countries coupled with rapid urbanization and often uncontrolled, massive internal migration due to poverty, conflicts, marginalization and natural disasters. In other countries, for instance in South-East Europe the phenomenon is even older and has even more complex origins. The impact of informal developments is often compounded by the frequent lack of effective policies on social and affordable housing. For example in 2014, there were approximately 2,500,000 informal buildings, constructed without permits, in Greece; 500,000 in Albania; 350,000 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and 130,000 in Montenegro. In an attempt to “bring order” and to stop these negative trends many countries have started to implement formalization measures. These include: privatizing occupied state-owned land and defining compensation for occupied, privately-owned land; revising zoning and planning procedures, developing/creating regulations and standards; regularizing and upgrading informal settlements; applying controls and upgrading individual constructions. Others have opted for other measures, such as demolition of illegal buildings.

This workshop will address challenges posed by illegal and unplanned urban growth in the region and discuss the tools available to governments to better the lives of their inhabitants. In addition to highlighting the recommendations of the new study, “Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities from South-East Europe” the workshop will also build on the recommendations of the UNECE “Self-Made Cities” publication which highlights major achievements in addressing the multiple dimensions of informal settlements in cities across the region. And whose conclusions draw attention to alternatives for local, national and global action and provide guidance on how to face the challenges that informal settlements pose.

The workshop is part of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) land management and capacity-building activities and will also focus on discussing guidance and preparing recommendations to WPLA for future work to assist policymakers, decision makers, planners and local authorities in their efforts to improve living conditions in informal settlements and/or find alternative solutions. Member States and international organizations will discuss measures that have been taken in countries in the UNECE region to address these challenges.

**Languages of the workshop: English, French, Russian**

**For more information, please contact:**

Amie Figueiredo

UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit

Email: [amie.figueiredo@unece.org](mailto:amie.figueiredo@unece.org)

Telephone: +41 22 917 26 25

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Morning Session: The challenges</b> <b>9:30-12:30</b></p>
<p>Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Elshad Khanalibayli</b>, Chair, UNECE Working Party on Land Administration</li><li>• <b>Christian Friis Bach</b>, Executive Secretary, UNECE</li></ul> <p>Workshop Chair: <b>Doris Andoni</b>, General Director, National Housing Agency (NHA) - Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism</p>
<p><i>Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities of Informal Settlements in South-East Europe</i> <b>Chryssy Potsiou</b>, President, International Federation of Surveyors FIG</p>
<p><i>Setting the scene: Results from “Self-made Cities” &amp; Recommendations from Country Profiles</i> <b>Anna Badyina</b>, Honorary Research Fellow, University of Birmingham</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>11:00 – 11:15 Coffee Break (served outside the conference room)</i></p>
<p><i>Registration Policy of Georgia for Illegal Buildings</i> <b>Ekaterina Meskhidze</b>, National Agency of Public Registry - Ministry of Justice of Georgia</p>
<p><i>Perspectives on Informal Settlements from Albania</i> <b>Doris Andoni</b>, General Director, NHA - Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Questions &amp; Answer Session</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>12:30-14:30 Lunch</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Afternoon Session: The way forward</b> <b>14:30-17:30</b></p>
<p><b>Perspectives from International Organizations</b></p>
<p><i>Improving Methods for Legalization of Informal Settlements in Montenegro</i> <b>Dragana Cenic</b>, Project Coordinator, Center for Sustainable Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Montenegro</p>
<p><i>Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme</i> <b>Annika Lenz</b>, Liaison Officer, UN-Habitat</p>
<p><b>Bahram Ghazi</b>, Human Rights Officer, Economic, Social and Cultural rights (ESCRs), Housing, Water and Sanitation, Land and Human rights, Human Rights and Social and Economic Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)</p>

*Voluntary Guidelines and Informal Tenure*

Joint presentation:

**Rumyana Tonchovska**, Senior Land Administration Officer - IT, FAO of the UN

**Gavin Adlington**, Lead Land Administration Specialist, World Bank

**Kim Roberson**, Global Cluster Coordinator, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Breakout Groups:**

Participants are asked to participate to:

- Identify challenges and relevant initiatives
- Discuss guidance
- Prepare recommendations to WPLA

**Presentation workshop recommendations**

DRAFT