

## **Report of the WPLA Bureau Meeting Bergen, Norway, 9 April 2008**

### **Item 1: Adoption of the agenda**

The meeting was held at the Radisson Royal SAS Hotel in Bergen, Norway. All bureau members attended. The chair opened the meeting and introduced three new bureau members: Ms. Guranda Goglidze from Georgia, Mr. Sergei Shavrov from Belarus and Mr. Jon Atkey from the United Kingdom. He then asked the new Secretary to the Committee on Housing and Land Management, Ms. Paola Deda, to introduce herself to the Bureau.

Bureau members were asked to consider the provisional agenda, which was adopted without amendments. Due to logistical reasons the chair modified the sequence for the consideration of agenda items. For ease of reference, this report follows the sequence of the provisional agenda.

### **Item 2 : Membership of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM), and its Programme of Work**

As recently agreed at the meeting in Geneva on 25th February, the Bureau was requested to formally consider candidates to become members of the REM, the newly established Real Estate Market Advisory Group. As previously decided, the group would initially be composed of 6 members. As 6 applications were received and applicants considered qualified and well experienced, the Bureau decided to accept them all. REM members therefore are: Wolfgang Amann (Austria), Giampiero Bambagioni (Italy), Enrico Campagnoli (Italy), David Egiashvili (Georgia), Brian Emmott (UK), and Jonathan Harris (UK). The members were invited to elect a chairman and vice chairman in due course.

Bureau members remarked the lack of gender balance in the group and invited REM to identify women that could join the group at a later stage. The need to ensure geographical balance was also highlighted. The Bureau also reserves the right to consider and endorse future membership. REM members will have observer status in the Bureau sessions. Participation in the Bureau meeting should be limited to two members.<sup>1</sup>

In the afternoon, REM members introduced the main elements of the REM work programme and the way the group intends operate, i.e. generally working together, although individual members might take the leadership on issues where they have a specific competence or experience.

The Chair highlighted the need to clarify in the work programme the reporting line of the REM, which should provide technical advice to WPLA and, through WPLA, to the CHLM. REM will amend the work programme to reflect the correct reporting line. It was also agreed that no country profiles on the real estate market would be developed, but that REM would contribute to Country Profiles and/or Land Administration Reviews on issues pertaining to the real estate market, as appropriate.

REM work programme was approved as basis for their work, with amendments as above.

### **Item 3: Organization of the workshop “Legal Empowerment of the Poor in the UNECE Region” in Bergen**

Mr. Magnar Danielsen, informed the Bureau on organizational matters and the programme of the workshop on “Legal Empowerment of the Poor”, to start on the following day. The workshop was to be attended by over 120 participants from 37 countries. He invited Bureau members to attend an organizational meeting later that afternoon.

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<sup>1</sup> As specified in the REM modalities of operation: “ (...) REM members may participate in Bureau meetings as observers. Attendance at Bureau meetings is normally delegated to the Chair and Vice-Chair of REM. Additional members will be invited as necessary. “

#### **Item 4: Sixth session of the WPLA in 2009**

The Secretariat explained the request of the UNECE Executive Office to change the current scheduling of the WPLA meeting, from now on to be held prior to the CHLM session, in order for the Subsidiary Body (the WPLA) to be able to report on the progress in the implementation of the work plan at the regular sessions of the CHLM and, when appropriate, for the CHLM to take any decisions related to it. The chair suggested to hold the next WPLA meeting in June and the proposal was accepted by the Bureau. The Secretariat will check possible dates and report back to the Bureau members shortly.

Given the earlier date for the next session of the WPLA, the chair also reminded about the need to start preparations early in advance. He also invited Bureau members to identify topics and countries for the next workshops, as related to the implementation of the WPLA programme of work.

#### **Item 5: Review of work in progress**

##### ***a.) Land administration policies***

##### **Fees and charges**

Mr. Neil King, expert to draft the study on fees and charges, explained the structure and contents and asked the Bureau to provide some guidance for the further development of the study.

Several comments and suggestions were provided by Bureau members, including:

- the need to distinguish between and those statutory tasks that should be not charged to the user and those that would need full cost recovery;
- the need to define the context in the introduction and main message and to stress the importance and value of the service, ( i.e. land registration is at the basis of good economic development and can bring several benefits);
- the need to identify and describe categories and regimes, and within each example highlight good practices;
- the need to provide a balanced avoiding any Western focus and view of the topic;
- the need to make use of EU INSPIRE directives on the issue;
- the need for the author to contact again some countries with specific questions in order to fill some of the current gaps in information;
- the need to refer to previous studies on the issue, such as the ones of Fernando Mendez;
- the need to consider the self-financing principle;
- the need to base principles and good practices on examples, and provide the rationale for each.

It was agreed that the UK will act as main focal point for the author to discuss the further development of the study. Bureau members are invited to send specific comments on the current text by e-mail to Mr, King. The Secretariat will be provided with a second draft for distribution to the Bureau members and further comments by the end of May. Comments from the Bureau will be included in a third draft to be shared with the CHLM in September.

The Czech Republic informed the Bureau that they will finance the printing of the study, in the three UNECE official languages<sup>2</sup>, once completed. The Bureau was grateful to the representative of the Czech Republic for this offer.

#### **Workshop on Influence of Land Administration on People and Business, Cavtat, Croatia (2-3 October 2008)**

Mr. Damir Pahić was requested to report on status of preparations of the workshop on the “Influence of Land Administration on People and Business” to take place in Cavtat, Croatia, on 2-3 October 2008. He provided a thorough overview of the agenda, including specific sessions and proposed speakers.

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<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat wishes to remind that to be translated as part of the official documents to be submitted to the CHLM or WPLA regular sessions, the study should not exceed the 18 pages (standard UNECE document format).

The chair stressed the importance of diversifying presentations and speakers, in particular guaranteeing involvement from outside the Bureau, and provided some suggestions on how to structure the concluding session. The Secretariat also reminded the organizers of the need to make sure that the workshop is in line with and provides a practical contribution to the WPLA work plan, and to the overall sustainable development agenda of the UN.

Proposals on how to structure the different sessions were made by different Bureau members, including suggestions to:

- Cover the issue of business in session 4;
- Cover the topic/present the study on fees and charges;
- Identify a more appropriate title for session 2.

Discussions also covered the organization of the Bureau meeting in the margins of the workshop. It was agreed that the regular meeting of the Bureau will take place in the afternoon prior to the workshop, while a short session to take place the day following the workshop will discuss how to integrate results of the workshop in the WPLA work plan.

### ***b.) Major trends characterizing land administration development***

#### Study on informal settlements

The Secretariat reported on progress made in the development of the study on informal settlements. A draft study was prepared by one of the experts (Ms. Sasha Sasha Tsenkova). The draft presents a good analytical overview of the phenomenon. The study needs now to reflect the perspective of land administration and also to further develop practical recommendations and guidance.

It was agreed that Ms. Chryssy Potsiou will now review the draft, and provide text to mainstream and reinforce the land administration aspects of the study. She will share her contribution with the WPLA Bureau members by mid of July and will provide the final input to the Secretariat by the end of July.

The Secretariat also informed about the planning of a meeting on 24 September, back-to-back with the next session of the CHLM, to discuss the draft and collectively develop recommendations and guidance. Members of the CHLM and WPLA would be invited to attend. Bureau members welcomed the idea of this meeting. Between September 2008 and June 2009, the WPLA and CHLM Bureau will have the opportunity to comment and discuss the final draft, in order to have the published version of the study ready to be launched at the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the WPLA and thereafter endorsed by the CHLM.

#### Electronic conveyancing

As a follow-up to the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the WPLA, the UK had provided the results of the questionnaire distributed in November 2007 in Geneva concerning fraudulent use of online data. The paper was distributed to the Bureau members. The Bureau discussed possible future work on this item, including:

- The right level of inscription, authentication for deeds and documents to be transferred between practitioners and the identification of good practices;
- The need to identify the pros and cons with regard to data security;
- The need to broaden the discussion from security of conveyance to the amendment of related law.

It was agreed that a more detailed questionnaire to flesh out emerging practices should be developed by the UK. Results would be presented at the Bureau meeting and the workshop in Croatia and included in a paper to be transmitted to the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the WPLA in June 2009. The meeting in Croatia will agree on responsibilities for the development of such paper.

### ***c.) Land Administration Reviews***

### Bulgaria

The Bureau was updated on the progress made with the LAR of Bulgaria. The Secretariat had compiled the input received and reviewed the draft. The Secretariat will send in a week time detailed comments to the first draft. It was agreed that experts will integrate comments and make amendments as requested by the end of May. The Secretariat will then integrate the comments and send the final draft to Bulgaria, for comments, before the summer break.

### Tajikistan

The Chair reported on work undertaken and results of the preliminary mission. The second phase of the mission is expected to take place in September-October 2008. The Czech Republic informed the Bureau they are considering sending an expert from their country to join the mission.

### Follow up workshops

There is the need to agree on a date for the Workshop in Bulgaria to take place in spring 2009. The secretariat will contact the Bulgarian delegation in due course.

### Land Administration Review

The Chair informed the Bureau that Latvia is not prepared to have a review at the moment, and the mission would be postponed for the moment.

### Country Profile/ Land Administration of Kyrgyzstan

The group was informed about progress in the organization of the mission to Kyrgyzstan, and composition of the team. Jon Atkey (UK) will be the expert drafting the chapter on land administration.

### **Item 6: International cooperation and promotion of the WPLA work**

The Chair also invited the Bureau to discuss participation in future meetings of relevance to the work of the WPLA, including the upcoming workshop in Albania on the real estate market, and the workshop on informal settlements on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

Bureau members also reported on workshops attended and other initiatives and meetings in the pipeline.

### **Item 7: Self-evaluation of the WPLA workshop series**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau members of possible ways to undertake the self-evaluation, including surveys with WPLA members and workshops participants, and desk studies.

Bureau members were in favour of undertaking a survey after the workshops, in particular a survey should be undertaken after the workshop in Croatia. The delegation of Croatia and the Secretariat, both with previous experience in this type of surveys, will develop the questionnaire. Other Bureau members were invited to provide other sample questionnaires, in case they have developed some for similar purposes.

### **Item 8: Other business**

There were no other businesses.

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