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ACTIVITIES OF THE HOUSING AND URBAN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY NETWORK
Report by Mr. Pfeiffer, Chairman of the Network

Introduction

1. In 1997, the ECE Committee on Human Settlements established the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network in which local authorities, the private sector and other non-governmental actors involved in housing and urban management would participate. The Committee agreed on the Network's terms of reference, as contained in the report of its fifty-eighth session (ECE/HBP/104, annex II). At its fifty-ninth session, in September 1998, the Committee gave a positive assessment of the Network's first year of activities and invited it to draw up a progress report. The present report was prepared in response to this request.

I. WORK OF THE NETWORK SINCE THE COMMITTEE'S FIFTY-NINTH SESSION

2. During the reporting period, the Network met twice, in conjunction with the meetings of the Committee's Bureau. In its discussions with the Bureau, the Network:

- Provided its views on the Committee's strategic planning process;
- Supported ongoing projects of the Committee's programme of work;
- Assisted in disseminating the results of the country profiles and case studies, as well as in the practical implementation of recommendations;
- Extended its contacts with other organizations and individuals;
- Assisted in achieving synergies within the ECE and with other international organizations.

3. The Network supported the five challenges identified in the Committee's draft strategy: promoting a system of meaningful and democratic governance; improving urban environmental performance; facilitating social cohesion; promoting market reform in the housing and urban sector; and promoting land markets and securing private rights in land (HBP/1999/4). It considers that the Committee should further strengthen practical approaches to housing improvements, land-use planning and urban renewal, land administration through, inter alia, its programme of operational activities (HBP/1999/8).

4. The Committee's programme of housing sector profiles and case studies on urban environmental performance, renewal and housing modernization are of considerable value and more attention should be given to:

- Disseminating the results and implementing the recommendations;
- Presenting the studies' results to the national authorities in the countries concerned. The Committee should make this a condition before initiating a study; initiatives for such presentations should come from the Committee;
- Organizing "monitoring" workshops in countries where the studied were carried out to provide practical assistance in the implementation;
- Identifying bottlenecks in the development of the private sector and in the promotion of investments in the housing and urban sectors.

5. The Network provided financial assistance to countries in transition to attend the Workshop on housing privatization in Poland (June 1999). It also helped the secretariat to find key speakers for a workshop on condominiums in Moscow (July 1999). In cooperation with the delegation of the United Kingdom, it intends to organize a meeting on public-private partnership in Manchester (5-6 November 1999). The purpose of the meeting will be to examine current practice of public-private partnership in housing development and urban regeneration.

6. To ensure coherent assistance to all countries in transition, the Network would like to establish focal points for housing and urban development in all countries in transition (contacts in existing agencies engaged in urban development and investment in these countries). It will give support to the Committee's operational activities, including any future activities related to the Balkan region.

7. The network intends to find external funding for the preparation of country profiles on the housing sector and for case studies on sustainable urban development, and for organization of special meetings, workshops, etc. in countries with economies in transition.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

8. The Network considers that, to be effective, its members should attend at least one of its meetings each year, otherwise their membership will automatically be terminated.

9. Mr. H. Pfeiffer, Building Savings Bank, was elected as Chairperson of the Network.