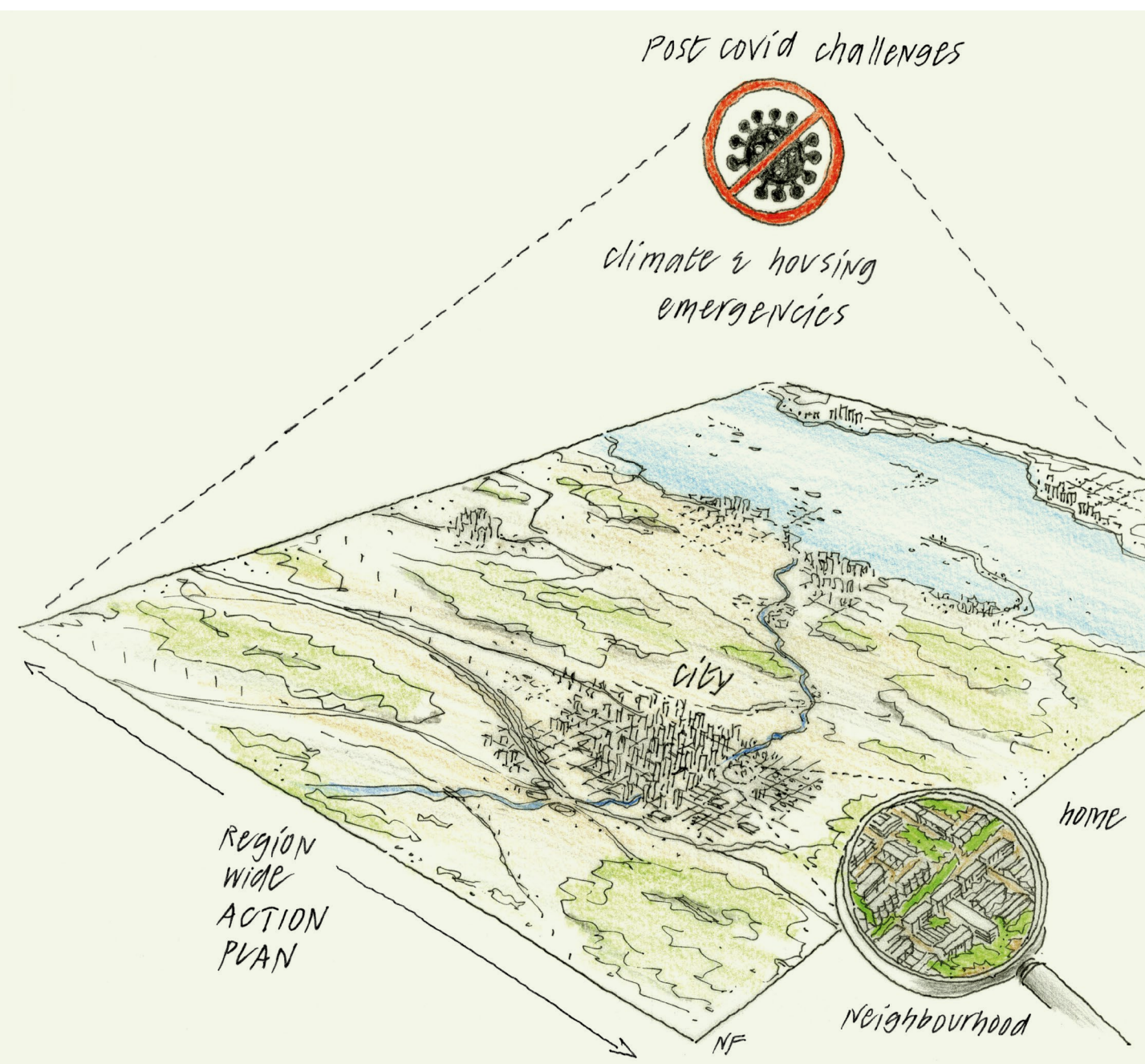


Place and life in the ECE A Regional Action Plan 2030

Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes



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Foreword

Cities and urban areas, home to over half of the world's population, are facing multiple challenges, including the lingering effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, climate change, and rapid urbanization. These challenges carry negative social, economic and environmental consequences, which, in many countries, are compounded by the lack of adequate and affordable housing. While local and national authorities have implemented a vast array of exceptional emergency measures to support the most vulnerable segments of their population and address the climate change challenge, the road to recovery remains uncertain. This is particularly the case for countries lacking the required capacities and financial resources.

It is, therefore, a great pleasure to present the UNECE regional action plan "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" for helping UNECE cities and national governments ensure simultaneous treatment of the multi-faceted challenges to achieving sustainable and affordable housing and sustainable urban development.

The Regional Action Plan provides an integrated and balanced approach for supporting local and national development efforts until 2030 in two inter-linked policy areas: cities, neighbourhoods, homes and rural life; and sustainable housing and homes. It contains clear and concise guiding principles, goals, targets and actions for building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable people-centred cities in the UNECE region with affordable, accessible and climate-neutral housing.

The Regional Action Plan is anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, and the United Nations system-wide COVID-19 response guidance documents, thereby providing a universal language for policy dialogue and international cooperation. It also provides a common approach for conceptualizing and implementing forward-looking solutions for upscaling the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All the United Nations Member States stand to benefit from this powerful tool.



Olga ALGAYEROVA

Under-Secretary-General
of the United Nations

Executive Secretary of the United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe

Preface

To support the COVID-19 response efforts in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management mandated¹ the secretariat with the task of preparing a Regional Action Plan to inform high-level discussions during the 2021 Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management². Specifically, the Committee stipulated the following:

- ▶ The Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management is further expected to launch a regional action plan for the ECE region “#Housing 2030: promoting sustainable housing as part of the recovery and rebuilding plans after the COVID-19 pandemic” (ECE/HBP/2020/10, paragraph 13).
- ▶ The Regional Action Plan is expected to support Governments in the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis through the sharing of examples and good practices in facilitating investments and promoting the “building better” approach - as outlined in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19”... The adoption of the Regional Action Plan by the Ministerial Meeting will facilitate an exchange of good practices and experiences, support countries in shaping policy packages and financial measures to promote sustainable housing and urban development (ECE/HBP/2020/10, paragraph 14).

The Committee emphasized that the Regional Action Plan should focus on supporting sustainable and affordable housing as outlined in the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing³ as well as sustainable urban development. The Committee noted that the Regional Action Plan should be anchored in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁴, the Paris Agreement⁵, the New Urban Agenda⁶ and the United Nations guidance report “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19”⁷. It should also build on the “#Housing 2030: Effective Policies for Affordable Housing in the UNECE Region” study⁸, developed by UNECE in cooperation with Housing Europe, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and other partners as well as the #Housing2030 initiative⁹.

These key documents, together with the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development¹⁰, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development in the Economic Commission for Europe Region¹¹, and the United Nations system-wide guidance documents on COVID-19 response provide the basis for the UNECE Regional Action Plan.

The Regional Action Plan provides an integrated, balanced approach to achieving sustainable and affordable housing and sustainable urban development. It contains clear and concise guiding principles, goals, targets and actions for supporting local and national development efforts in the UNECE region until 2030, and for bolstering international cooperation. It was endorsed by UNECE member States in 2021 at the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

¹ The mandate was given during the eighty-first annual session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, which was held from 6 to 9 October 2020.

² The Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management was held from 6 to 8 October 2021.

³ The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing is available at https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/charter/Language_versions/ENG_Geneva_UN_Charter.pdf.

⁴ For more information, see <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

⁵ For more information, see <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

⁶ For more information, see <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>.

⁷ The report is available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/shared-responsibility-global-solidarity-responding-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19>.

⁸ The study is available at https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Housing2030%20study_E_web.pdf.

⁹ For more information, see <https://www.housing2030.org/>.

¹⁰ The declaration is available at <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/2910>.

¹¹ The Habitat III Regional report for the UNECE region is available at <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/01/habitatiii-regional-report-europe-region.pdf>.

Acknowledgements

The Regional Action Plan was developed by the secretariat of the Housing and Land Management Unit, Forests, Land and Housing Division of UNECE with the support of the Glasgow Urban Lab*.

The illustrations in the Regional Action Plan were designed by international award-winning architect Norman Foster, President of the Norman Foster Foundation. The Foundation has a long-standing partnership with UNECE as a Centre of Excellence for the promotion of sustainable housing and cities. The illustrations present a forward-looking vision of city planning, incorporating the different elements of sustainable urban development, including energy efficiency, respect for cultural and social values, and green spaces.

* The Glasgow Urban Lab is a Centre of Excellence of UNECE which operates as a partnership between Glasgow School of Art and the Glasgow City Council for capacity-building on sustainable urban development.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

2030 Agenda	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
ECE	(United Nations) Economic Commission for Europe
DESA	(United Nations) Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Habitat III	United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development
HSE	Health, Safety and Environment
NUA	New Urban Agenda
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SEIA	Socio-Economic Impact Assessments
UCLG	United Cities and Local Government
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization

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