

INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR SMART CITIES AND BETTER LIVES

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PRESS RELEASE

The major challenge for the governments today is how to provide people with a decent quality of life, while at the same time managing the pressures coming from overpopulation, rapid demographic growth, urbanization and climate change. Nowadays, half of the world's inhabitants live in cities and urban areas which are depleting our planet's resources and people's living conditions are worsening. Hence, "smart cities" are necessary to allow citizens to live in a more sustainable and efficient environment. In order to achieve this, cooperation is needed among all the stakeholders who should work together to the right solutions and implement them.

The region covered by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) houses less than a fifth of the world's population and is characterized by high levels of urbanization. According to estimates, more than 73 per cent of the population are urban residents and by 2050 this will rise to 85 per cent. This high level of urbanization presents serious challenges for sustainable development and climate change adaptation. In fact, urban areas are responsible for a considerable part of the world's energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This situation has the potential to become serious and irreparable if not acted upon soon.

In the UNECE region, much attention has been recently dedicated to the topic of "smart cities", which is already addressed within multiple European projects and forums. Further to these, the UNECE's Committee on Housing and Land Management has organized, in cooperation with Geospatial Media and Communication, the workshop "Land Information Systems for Smart Cities".

The goals of the workshop are: to showcase examples of land administration systems which form a strong foundation for smart cities; present success stories from authorities who successfully implemented smart city approaches; share information on the wide range of software, services and technologies available for developing sound information systems for smart cities; and brainstorm on possible future steps to promote effective and modern land administration and the implementation of smart city approaches.

Speakers at the workshop include: representatives from 20 countries, including many UNECE member States and also India, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates who come from governments, academia and companies. The topics they will address include information systems to support urban planning and management, land administration, housing, energy, environment and disaster risk reduction. The workshop will highlight several approaches to the use of Land Information Systems for improving city services and increasing the participation of citizens in cities' decision-making processes.

This event is a part of the Sixth Geospatial World Forum, a bi-annual international conference and exhibition, which supports dialogue on geospatial technologies and their role in promoting economic and social development. The Geospatial World Forum brings together more than 1000 delegates from over 80 countries deliberating on geospatial technologies and their role in promoting sustainable development. The event takes

place at the Centre International de Conférences Genève from 5th to 10 May 2014 and the UNECE workshop on 8 and 9 May.

Information on the workshop “Land information systems for smart cities” is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34473>

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