

Dear guests
and participants of the seminar,

Let me welcome you on the Tajik soil and wish you to achieve fruitful and creative results during the sustainable housing and urban development national capacity building seminar organised by the Committee for Architecture and Construction under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UN-Habitat.

I wish to remind those present here that in 2011, following the request of the Committee for Architecture and Construction, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe came with a mission to familiarise themselves with the situation in the housing sector in Tajikistan, housing-related tasks the country faces, including energy efficiency.

The study involved a group of international and national experts.

Ultimately, after completing the study and carrying out the research, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe prepared a housing profile for Tajikistan.

I would like to note that the presentation of this profile took place in Dushanbe in May 2013 with the participation of international and national experts, as well as representatives of the relevant ministries and departments.

After this event, national experts drafted an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations from the housing and land management country profile for Tajikistan, many of which have been stated to be implemented and require assistance from international partners to translate them into reality.

Dear participants,

The acquisition of political independence and transition to a market economy brought significant changes to the construction sector of the Republic of Tajikistan. The large volume of construction works in the Republic of Tajikistan is the result of well-targeted policies of Emomali Rahmon, the distinguished President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Government aimed at further development of the country's economy.

For a short period in its history after the acquisition of independence, the Republic achieved significant success in social and economic development, improving living standards and quality of life of the population, and integrating the country into the global economic system.

Due to the transition to market economy, the main objective of the housing policy is to provide conditions for the construction of affordable and energy-efficient housing for the low-income people.

For Tajikistan, with its entire territory located in a seismically dangerous area, the problem of seismic security of residential and public buildings is of paramount importance, as its successful solution will reduce the seismic risk for cities and settlements of the Republic.

Scientific and research organisations of the Republic are working to define the seismic hazards for the territories, and are also working on seismic microzoning for cities and settlements, and detailed seismic zoning for the vital facilities. They also carry out research and experiments aimed at improving the seismic resistance of both new and existing developments, and assess the seismic vulnerability of existing buildings.

Rural houses in the Republic of Tajikistan are built from clay and stones, and mud bricks with mud walls.

Multiple data show that buildings with walls made of clay and stone lack sufficient seismic resistance. The problem of building houses from local materials and, if necessary, their rehabilitation and reinforcement is still there because such houses are still built and they are predominant in rural areas.

I would also like to mention that today it is difficult to imagine the wellbeing of a state without properly developed energy industry. Steady growth in energy prices made life significantly harder in both developed and developing countries. Under these circumstances, every country is to take effective measures to promote energy efficiency and sustainable use of energy resources, especially if these are scarce. For example, annual wintertime power shortages in Tajikistan exceed 4.5 billion kilowatt-hours.

In this connection, provision of energy-efficient solutions in construction has become one of the most pressing issues for the Republic. The interest to this issue is due to the fact that the level of comfort of the buildings and their performance depend on the level of thermal protection of the buildings.

The solution to this problem is of utmost importance for the regions, which, on the one hand, lack their own resources and, on the other hand, have extreme climatic conditions. Such climatic conditions are characteristic of the Republic of Tajikistan, where housing design should address the vital need to reduce summer overheating as well as maintain proper indoor temperature in winter.

Implementation of the law "On energy saving" for the last 8 years has significantly advanced energy conservation agenda, especially in the area of statistical and metrological accounting of energy resources during production, transportation and consumption.

The buildings built in Tajikistan in the past proved ineffective in terms of energy efficiency. Consequently, these buildings consume high levels of energy, which entails significant consumption of thermal and electrical energy produced in the country.

I would like to especially emphasize that the existing grave problems in ensuring accessible environment for people with restricted mobility in Tajikistan are pre-defined by the lack of laws and regulations at various levels; lack of accessible regulatory documentation, weakness of existing governance structures; lack of clear allocation of responsibilities and accountability; need to improve the personnel training capacity; lack of integrity; low awareness and low public involvement.

Ensuring accessible environment for people with disabilities and people with restricted mobility is one of the most important social and economic issues affecting the rights and needs of a large number of citizens; and these issues require solutions based on the provisions of the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In accordance with para. 2 of Article 25 of the law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On social protection of people with disabilities", planning and development of cities and other human settlements, design of residential neighbourhoods and recreation areas, design solutions for new developments and renovation of buildings, constructions and their complexes are not allowed if they do not provide access for and are not designed to be used by people with disabilities.

I would like to note that the Committee for Architecture and Construction under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan since as early as 2004 has begun to update the existing normative and technical regulations, as well as develop national building codes and regulations. An example of this is the development of Urban Planning Rules and Regulations of the Republic of Tajikistan "Accessibility of Buildings and Structures for People with Restricted Mobility" in 2012.

With the support of various partner organizations, there are efforts to organise and carry out public awareness campaigns.

In conclusion, I would like to invite the representatives of respective bodies and structures present at this seminar, along with experts of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to mobilise their efforts in order to implement the recommendations on improving the housing sector in Tajikistan.

Thank you for your kind attention!