

SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENT OF SELMAN ERGÜDEN AT HABITAT  
PROFESSIONALS FORUM 2005 IN ISTANBUL

**“Governance – People - Professionals”**

**Civil society and Good Governance: How does the growing role of citizens impact on the urban planning process and the role of architects and planners? “**

The topic can be analyzed through various entry points, including the following:

- ***How can professional practice in urban planning and development be more effective and holistic?***

Many professionals working in related governmental institutions and local authorities deal mostly with bureaucratic issues and regulatory frameworks and have seldom opportunities to refresh their capacities and execute their skills. There should be arrangements to effectively utilize capacities of such professionals and opportunities for vocational training to increase such capacities. Furthermore teamwork should be promoted to increase synergies.

- ***How can the role of architects, planners and other related professionals in management capacity and decision making process be improved?***

It is worth to note that best opportunities to implement professionalism are facilitated when such professionals are in decision making positions and /or at positions to affect the decision makers. It is in this connection important that architects, planners are willing and eligible for public offices and they consider political competition and struggle as also a mandate. It is often the case that architects/planners are successful as mayors, ministers of urban development etc. It is however also the case that sometimes such professionals are very much carried away with their fixed ideas and projects and ignore advice and needed teamwork.

- ***How can the role of such professionals be improved in advocacy and in reaching out stakeholders more effectively?***

As it is important to have opportunities to practice professions, it is as well important to advocate correct and most appropriate policies and strategies. Professionalism should be well reflected in the media, press etc so that public opinion and stakeholders are well aware of issues, what needs to be done and how. There are many cases where architects and urban planners are more effective with their roles and activities in advocacy than their designs and projects.

- ***How can the role of such professionals be improved in mobilization of the capacity and potential of communities and their organizations?***

In relation and complementary to above points, it is important that architects, urban planners and other related professionals work together with communities and with their organizations. This approach has been proved to be very effective in numerous cases. As an example, the recent “Neighborhood Disaster Management” approach in Istanbul can be cited. Voluntary architects work with the neighborhood headman and the families/community in those respective areas to investigate the conditions of existing buildings and review what needs to be done for better preparedness for earthquakes.

- ***How the international level platform can effectively be utilized for such roles?***  
Associations of professionals both at the national and international level have important roles to play in setting standards, provision of guidance to professional practice and better coordination and cooperation with stakeholders as well as facilitating information and experience exchange. UIA, FIG and similar organizations are trying to fulfill these functions but there is obviously a need to improve their capacities and effectiveness of their activities.