Statement on Education of Architects and Planners

adopted by the ARC●PEACE meeting in Copenhagen 12 April 2012

This statement advocates a more socially responsible approach to architectural, planning and urban design education than currently exists in many parts of the world.

Few professions are so distinctly embedded in society as those of architects and planners. Consequently, the mandates we are given by our clients and employers do not always align with our democratic values and commitment to human rights, social, and economic equity. Under such conditions it is difficult to work towards socially and ecologically sustainable environments.

For ARC●PEACE the education of architects and planners is a key issue. It is critical that schools of architecture and planning provide their students with an understanding of the impact they can have in making the world a better place and, in fact, their responsibility to do so.

We urge professional schools to develop curricula and train instructors to teach the architectural and planning skills necessary to create healthy, socially sustainable environments and create buildings and plan cities with smaller carbon footprints that reduce consumption and conserve energy. In no way do we mean to diminish the important design objectives of firmness, commodity and delight.

ARC●PEACE recommends the following principles to reform both educational content and teaching methods in architecture and planning education and also urges students to participate in this critical process of educational reform.

Schools of architecture and planning, and professional organizations should:

• Demonstrate a strong commitment in curriculum development to human rights, social responsibility and ecological sustainability in architecture and planning;

• Promote a culture of listening and participatory design among architects and planners and inclusionary design processes that benefit disadvantaged and disenfranchised people who so often are ignored;

• Develop skills to orient the profession towards socially just, democratic design and technically sustainable design and planning solutions;

• Encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative education and research targeted to responsible architecture, design and planning;

• Help students and professional organizations to acquire a global perspective on the crisis level importance of leading the way to a sustainable future;

• Offer continuing education programs on socially and ecologically responsible architecture and planning for architects and planners in practice.

ARC●PEACE, International Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility is an international non-government, non-for-profit organization of architects, designers and planners, working against weapons of mass destruction and for non-violent conflict resolution, for the protection of nature and for responsible development of our built environment. It has consultative status to ECOSOC of the United Nations. See further: http://arcpeace.org/web/.