



**UCLG Committee
on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights**

**COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL INCLUSION,
PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

2016 MEETING

GWANGJU, 22 JULY 2016

MINUTES



DOCUMENTATION

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1. Minutes

The 2016 Meeting of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) was held on 22 July 2016 in the framework of the 6th World Human Rights Cities Forum. The meeting took place from 1 pm to 4.30 pm in the Asia Culture Centre.

1. Welcome and introductions

Soo A KIM, Human Rights directress of Gwangju City Hall, opened the meeting by welcoming all attendants in the city and expressing her satisfaction for having co-organized the the 6th World Human Rights Cities Forum along with the CSIPDHR.

Then, the **Mayor of Gwangju, Dr Jang-hyun YOON**, took the floor to thank all attendants their participation in the Forum, especially representatives from, Barcelona, Mexico City, Plaine Commune and Badalona as well as the Committee coordination team. The Mayor highlighted importance of having a Local Governments' network on social inclusion, participatory democracy and Human Rights issues, as well as the crucial role of Local Governments in the fight against inequalities. He also stated that the CSIPDHR meeting, as well as the Forum, try to contribute to co-create the city we want between all, regardless its inhabitants' administrative status. We all need to participate to build a better world and meetings like this need to contribute to strengthen closer cooperation links all over the world to do so.

After the Mayor's welcoming speech, each participant briefly introduced himself¹

2. Presentation of the work achieved by the Committee in 2015

The Coordinator of the Committee, **Magali Fricaudet**, presented the [Activities Report of 2015](#), highlighting the main activities regarding political advocacy, learning and knowledge production, political debate and communication.

She emphasized an important milestone achieved in 2015: the recognition of the Right to the City as one of the key messages brought by Local Governments, gathered by UCLG and the [Global Taskforce](#) of Local and Regional Governments, towards [Habitat III](#) and beyond. This also means the recognition of the work undertaken so far by the CSIPDHR in this regard.

On the other hand, the [Global Platform for the Right to the City](#) has become the permanent working space in which messages for inclusive, democratic and sustainable cities have been constructed, and where alliances between Local Governments and civil society have been reinforced –especially towards the definition of the [Habitat III Agenda](#).

¹ See the list attached.



Finally, 2015 was also the year of the launching of the program to assess the impact of public policies under the light of Human Rights included in the [Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City](#).

She also presented the [financial report](#) thanking members' financial contributions –particularly from Plaine Commune, Mexico City, Gwangju, Nantes, Bogota and the Departmental Council of Seine-Saint-Denis –without them, the work of the Committee would not be possible.

Antonio Aniesa, on behalf of Patrick Braouezec, President of Plaine Commune and Co-President of the CSIPDHR, highly valued the Committee's 2015 activities and highlighted the need to continue the work towards a global municipal movement for Human Rights in the framework of UCLG and its Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights. He also highlighted that the activities reported aimed at recognizing and disseminating these topics at the global stage, and emphasized the value of the exchanges that take place in forums and meetings like these ones, since they allow cities, civil society and experts to meet, to exchange experiences and to articulate the advocacy for Human Rights and the right to the city. Finally, he called not to leave local governments' voice to the biggest and most powerful cities: "Peripheral cities and their inhabitants also need to take the lead", he concluded.

3. Presentation and debate: How to reinforce the global alliance of Human Rights Cities to promote and strengthen the right to the city at local level?

The second part of the meeting was moderated by **José Téllez**, Badalona Deputy Mayor, which focused the debate on the challenges to protect, respect and promote Human Rights at local level.

Stefany Campins, on behalf of Mexico City's Secretary for Social Development, M.r José Ramón Amieva took the floor in the first place, pointing out some of the major challenges ahead for the implementation of the Right to the City at global level: the establishment of a social protection system; the development of participatory projects aiming at meeting the need of solutions coming from the people; the fight against vertical inequalities through decent and guaranteed minimum incomes; the inclusion of a gender approach to public action as a transversal perspective to combat horizontal inequalities; the fight against corruption, and the development of resilient mechanisms in cities, ensuring the right to food and to water. She also explained that most of these challenges are already being faced in Mexico City, especially those regarding horizontal inequalities –through inclusion policies for diverse social groups- and the creation of a food security system –through the promotion of urban agriculture, enabling to shorten the distance between producers and consumers, and feeding city's community restaurants using short circuits.

Then, **Mugiyanto**, Human Rights and Democracy Director of the Indonesian NGO [INFID](#), went to refer to the situation of Human Rights in his country, highlighting that Indonesia is a recent democracy that has to face issues like religious fundamentalism, intolerance and militarism. However, the decentralization process that started in 1988 has resulted in more than 500 Local Governments. Since then on, new, good leaderships have emerged, being oriented to local



development and politically committed to make their cities Human Rights territories. They have, however, lots of challenges to overcome: corruption, insufficient human resources, unclear and conflictive laws on local governments... We need to create a human rights culture through education, he claimed.

Rosemarie Del Rosario Trajano, Secretary General of the [Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates](#), took the floor to talk about the situation of her country, where human rights are understood in terms of fighting against poverty and hunger. She also highlighted two essential elements that local governments need to address urgently, in a participatory and comprehensive way: the right to life –face to the growth of criminality rates- and the right to free, impartial information.

Mortem Kjaerum, Director of the [Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights](#) (Sweden), focused on corruption, an issue “that has got few attention during these last years –the Committee is doing well by setting it on the global agenda”. It is important to emphasize the incompatibility between corruption and human rights –it has been widely proofed that that the former is one of the most eroding factors of the latter’s implementation, he claimed.

Prof. Na Gan Chea, Chairperson of the May 18 Archives in the city of Gwangju, highlighted his city’s history and role in the spread of the South Korean democratization process, which later extended to other Asian countries. He raised one of the main challenges that, in his view, Human Rights Cities have to face: “Human Rights are also exercised in public spaces, so it is essential to prevent their privatization and to safeguard public rights and freedoms”.

Antonio Aniesa, on behalf of the President of [Plaine Commune](#), also referred to the issue of public space and the need to link human rights and territory: we need to prevent the privatization of public space and the spatial segregation, paying special attention not to build cities where some people have rights while others don’t. Local authorities have a clear responsibility in guaranteeing public spaces for all, and they need to keep working for the ‘togetherness’.

Then, **Jyoti Sanghera**, Chief of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Division of the Office of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, highlighted that Human Rights are universal and indivisible: “we can’t entitle human rights to one group and not to another in a selective way. They are universal and indivisible”. Thus, being a human rights advocate means defending them either if they are referred to sex workers, LGBTQ people or political prisoners. In this regard, she also highlighted the fundamental role of local governments in the defence, guarantee and localization of human rights in territories, and expressed her satisfaction for having the chance, as part of the Forum and this meeting, to have evidence of Local Governments’ commitment to human rights. Finally, she also expressed the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ interest in deepening the collaboration with the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights.

Bachir Kanouté, coordinator of the NGO [ENDA-ECOPop](#) and the African section of the International Observatory for Participatory Democracy (IOPD), explained that the main challenge that human rights’ recognition and compliance are facing is the impunity that corruption has in most African countries. He also raised three main topics that may have serious consequences regarding human rights if ignored: firstly, people’s awareness of their own rights



–citizens need to know about the rights in order to be able to claim them. Secondly, the issue of local communities and decision-makers' capabilities: both inhabitants and elected officials need to know how to make human rights effective. Lastly, it is also important to work on citizens and officials' behaviour and attitudes –and education is crucial to this end.

The Committee's Coordinator, **Magali Fricaudet**, insisted on the importance of developing fair local tax systems enabling to actually redistribute wealth, to reduce inequalities and to fund public services needed to effectively implement Human Rights and the Right to the City. She identified the mobilization of financial resources as one of local governments' main challenges in order to make inhabitants' social, economic, cultural and environmental rights effective.

Jefferson Plantilla, Chief Researcher at [HURIGHTS-OSAKA](#), identified another challenge: Local Government officials' need to be trained on the development of local policies of Human Rights, for them to be able to implement these policies with a cross-cutting approach guaranteeing Human Rights like water and energy. Inhabitants will feel that they live in a Human Rights city, he stated, only when basic public services' provision will be made through a Human Rights transversal approach, ensuring their universality and inclusiveness, and preventing form of discrimination.

José Téllez, Badalona Deputy Mayor, addressed the issue of racism, defining it as a “way to ignore Human Rights”. He claimed that racism constitutes a process of de-universalization of rights that has been linked –at least in Europe- to privatization of services, limitation of access to basic rights like healthcare, and securitization of public spaces under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

After this, **Núria Martínez**, Head of the Barcelona City Hall Department for Citizen Rights, presented the Human Rights policy of her city's government, which introduces the Human Rights-based approach in local public policies as a cross-cutting element to fight inequalities, to combat discriminations and to promote tolerance. The plan, “Barcelona, City of Rights”, constitutes a new approach to public actions that allows to localize human rights and to renew the social contract with citizens. It is accessible [here](#).

Bipin Kumar Rai, expert member of the [Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board](#), also presented the policies of Delhi's new government, which won the elections thanks to a local coalition with civil society and with a strong agenda against corruption and for the guarantee of rights. In this regard, he explained the policies set up by the government to ensure the protection of human rights and, particularly, the rights to life and housing. A “zero evictions” policy is being applied, as well as a settlement upgrading programme for informal neighbourhoods –there are 3 million inhabitants currently living in these areas in Delhi. In accordance to this policy, the government is expanding the right to access to services to include all informal settlements' inhabitants, with a strong focus on access to water, sanitation, education and healthcare –whose gratuity is granted by the government.

Anselmo Lee, Executive Director of the [Korean Human Rights Foundation](#), focused his remarks on the need for Local Governments to implement and monitor the recommendations issued from international policy processes like Habitat III. “We need to find a way to get them involved in both processes, preventing the whole responsibility and competences to end up lying on States' hands”, he said. To this end, it is essential to maintain a stable network of



human rights cities enabling them to keep organized and to share information. It is also fundamental to defend and promote local democracy: without democracy there is no transparency and, more important, there is no governmental accountability regarding Human Rights.

Finally, **Gyonggu Shin**, Executive Director of the [Gwangju International Center](#), highlighted the importance of children's education on human rights, giving them direct experience of human rights and their benefits. It is also essential to create common spaces for students, professors, human rights advocates, Local Governments' officials... This is the only way to ensure human rights' future, he stated. Dr Shin insisted on the human dimension of the construction of human rights territories, highlighting the importance of meetings like this one as spaces for real meetings between Human Rights advocates. Face-to-face contact allows sharing and boosting motivation between people aiming at building real Human Rights Cities.

4. Presentation of the 2016 Action Plan

Magali Fricaudet, Coordinator of the Committee, presented the main working lines of 2016 Action Plan: networking, political advocacy, research and documentation, synergies with UCLG network, and learning and monitoring. The 2016 Action Plan is already accessible [here](#).

In 2016, the Committee will keep promoting key messages regarding the inclusion of the Right to the City and Human Rights Cities towards the New Habitat and Urban Agenda, to be defined in the Habitat III Conference –Quito (Ecuador), 17-20 October 2016.

Additionally, it will continue its work to support and valorise local policies for social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights, strengthening the work within UCLG network with other Committees and collaborating with civil society, academia and UN agencies –such as the [UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#).

Finally, she added that all the concerns raised in the meeting will allow us to define the strategic working lines of the Committee for next years.

To close the meeting, Soo A KIM, Gwangju's Human Rights Director, gave appointment to participants for the 7th edition of the World Human Rights Cities Forum, which will be held in Gwangju on autumn 2017. Finally, **Stefany Campins** sincerely thanked attendants for their participation and knowledge and closed the meeting.