

7th World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF)

Do we live in peace? Human Rights Cities, Democracy and Practice

14 – 17 September, 2017 / Gwangju Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea

Final Statement

We, participants of the 7th WHRCF,

1. Reaffirm the vision of human rights city adopted at the first WHRCF in 2011 and the Gwangju Guiding Principles for Human Rights City adopted at the 4th WHRCF in 2014,
2. Reaffirm the principles of universality and indivisibility of human rights and interdependence between peace, democracy, sustainable development and human rights,
3. Recognize the role of local government as a frontier for human rights implementation based on the principle of subsidiarity between central government and local governments,
4. Are greatly encouraged by the Gwangju spirit which continues to inspire human rights defenders and democracy advocates in Korea and beyond,
5. Express our deep appreciation to Gwangju Metropolitan City and its citizens for their ongoing commitment to host the WHRCF since 2011 as annual platform for sharing, learning and debating about achievements, challenges and opportunities of human rights city,
6. Welcome the participation of new pioneers and innovators for human rights city, especially those from the countries and societies prone to conflicts and natural disasters such as small developing island nations in Asia and the Pacific,
7. Are deeply concerned about the escalating security crisis in the Korean Peninsula and urge all concerned parties to resolve the crisis through dialogue and peaceful means,
8. Are deeply concerned about the escalating humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, regarding in particular the Rohingya situation and call for effective measures and intervention by all parties to stop the ongoing genocide,
9. Are deeply concerned about the worsening human rights crisis in the Philippines as illustrated by the ongoing human rights violations committed during the War on Drugs and express our solidarity with victims and human rights defenders, including the

Philippines Commission on Human Rights,

10. Are concerned about the ongoing human rights violations occurring in the Occupied Palestine Territories (OPT), and call for a peaceful solution to the conflicts,
11. Are inspired by the spirit of the Candlelight Civic Revolution which took place on the 30th anniversary of Democratic Movement of June 1987 and its positive results for human rights and democracy in South Korea,
12. Are encouraged by the participants' stories about successful human rights city movements and initiatives across the world, such as Indonesia and Sweden,
13. Note the outcome of the first inter-sessional panel of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on local government and human rights held in Geneva on 4 Sept. 2017,
14. Expect the UN Human Rights Council to adopt the new resolution giving the UN HRC Advisory Committee a new mandate to prepare for a follow-up report to assess the progress since the first report of the UN HRC in July 2015 on local government and human rights, and to develop guiding principles for local government and human rights,
15. Welcome the outcomes and recommendations from thematic sessions on various issues such as City and Gender, Social Economy and Community Vitalization, City and the Elderly, City and Child, Youth Education, Village Democracy, City and Environment, State Violence and Human Rights, Disability and Human Rights, and Migrants Refugees and Human Rights,
16. Welcome the positive outcome of the Special Sessions to strengthen networks of human rights cities in South Korea,
17. Welcome the initiative of the May 18 Foundation to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Asian Human Rights Charter in Gwangju in 1998,
18. Welcome the first draft of the Gwangju Guiding Principles for Local Government and Human Rights which was discussed at the 4th Expert Workshop on Local Government and Human Rights,
19. Welcome the outcome of the 2nd annual meeting of Local Democracy and Human Rights Cities (LDC) Network Asia organized by Asia Democracy Network (ADN) and Gwangju Metropolitan City,
20. Anticipate the year 2018 which is the 70th anniversary of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 25th anniversary of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) as new opportunity for global human rights movement for human rights city,

21. Anticipate the year 2018, which is the 70th anniversary of the Korean government as well as the 1948 Constitution following the liberation from 36 yearlong Japanese colonial rule, and regard this as a new opportunity for human rights city movement in South Korea,

Commitment to Action

- 1 *We commit ourselves to work for more a peaceful, inclusive and safer society through conflict transformation and peace-making via people-to-people and bottom-up solidarity actions while implementing the recommendations made by various sessions during the 7th WHRCF,*
- 2 *We commit ourselves to promoting a global network of human right cities as a platform for stakeholders in partnership with international associations of local governments and cities such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights,*
- 3 *We commit ourselves to the full implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in policies and programs of local governments via human rights-based approach,*
- 4 *We commit ourselves to the full implementation of the New Urban Agenda of the UN HABITAT III (Quito, Oct. 2016) through the promotion of the right to city and,*
- 5 *We commit ourselves to the full implementation of the recommendations of the final report of the UN Human Rights Council on Local Government and Human Rights (July 2015) including the development of guiding principles for local government and human rights.*

We will reconvene in Gwangju at the 8th WHRCF 2018 to review the implementation of above commitments and discuss new challenges and opportunities in promoting the vision of human rights cities globally.