

Circular 115

UCLG Committees and Working Groups

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Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

Local voices for Human Rights, Peace and Democracy

Main outcomes of the 7th edition of the World Human Rights Cities Forum (Gwangju)

Dear members,

After the celebration of its 7th edition in September 2017, the [World Human Rights Cities Forum](#) (WHRCF) has proved to be the main meeting point for human rights cities at the global level. Over the past years, the city of Gwangju (which is also a co-Chair of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights) has brought together hundreds of local governments and civil society representatives to exchange knowledge, experience and learning on how to bring human rights back to the daily life of urban populations, through local action. The WHRCF community has also turned into a strong advocacy platform, rallying an alliance of local governments and communities committed to advance the human rights agenda at the global stage.

Held under the theme "*Do we live in Peace: Human Rights Cities, Democracy and Practice*", [its 2017 edition was focused on](#) boosting the agenda of human rights cities (*#Cities4Rights*) as well as to tackle its relations with local democracy and peace. In this regard, up to 700 participants attended its various sessions and debates around meaningful experiences, such as Korea's candlelight movement or [Madrid's initiative on direct democracy "Decide Madrid"](#).

As a partner organization of the Forum, member cities of our Committee mobilized and sent their representatives to the Forum: the Mayor of **Bethlehem**, Mr. Anton Salman; the Deputy Mayor of **Madrid**, Mr. Mauricio Valiente; the Deputy Mayors of **Grenoble**, Mr. Emmanuel Carroz and Mr. Bernard Macret; as well as Ms. Stefany Campins, in representation of **Mexico City's** Social Development Secretary, Mr. José Ramón Amieva. Representatives of partner organizations also took part in the Forum: the **Global Platform for the Right to the City**, **Observatori DESC**, **Kota Kita Foundation** and the **US Human Rights Cities Alliance**.

The following documents present several of the main outcomes of the Forum to date:

- A [presentation](#) that synthesises ideas and events that took place during the Forum through the voices of some of its participants. In September, the Committee had already noted how the "[Human Rights Cities Movement is on the rise](#)".
- The [final Declaration of the Forum](#), calling for committed actions to link local governance with human rights and democracy as a way to build a more peaceful world. This declaration is available in **French**, **Spanish** and **English**.
- The [minutes](#) of Gwangju's Expert Group meeting, aimed at discussing UN guiding principles on local governments and human rights under the light of local practices and experiences (as a follow up of the [work of the UN Human Rights system on the subject](#) where the Committee actively collaborated).

All the interventions to the Forum were gathered and published on [its official website](#).

In perspective, it should be highlighted how the network of cities for Human Rights and the Right to the City is increasingly gaining ground, becoming a platform for defending democratic cities and territories at the service of the common good. Once more, the city of Gwangju has provided a meaningful space to that end, bringing together local action and commitments from all around Asia as well as on a global level.

Sincerely,

The UCLG World Secretariat

on behalf of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

Please click on the links below to access the following documents:

- [Presentation "Local voices for Human Rights"](#)
- [Final declaration](#)
- [Minutes of Gwangju's Experts Group Meeting](#)



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