

2014 World Human Rights Cities Forum
15-18 May 2014 / Gwangju, Republic of Korea

Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City
(Gwangju Principles)

adopted on 17 May 2014.

We, participants of the 2014 World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) held in Gwangju, Korea on 16-18 May 2014,

1. Reaffirming that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,
2. Recognizing that all levels of governments national, regional and local, has an obligation to protect, respect and fulfill all human rights in their own mandate and competence,
3. Recognizing that human rights city is an urban community that applies the human rights-based approach to urban governance,
4. Recognizing that human rights city is an open and participatory process where all actors are engaged in the decision-making and implementation process to improve quality of life in the urban context,
5. Recognizing that human rights city is a framework to cultivate an inclusive and equitable city based on human rights standards,
6. Recognizing that human rights city has a specific responsibility to implement a human rights-based approach to municipal governance while recognizing different forms and functions in each country in accordance with its constitution and legal system,
7. Recognizing that the right to the city is a strategic tool for people to realize their rights to enjoy a decent life through their active participation in urban context,
8. Recognizing that the right to the city take into account the common interests for socially just and environmentally balanced use of urban space over the individual right to property,
9. Recognizing the right to the city ensures full access to basic services including food, education, housing, energy, mobility as well as public facilities that are adequate, affordable, acceptable and adaptable,
10. Bearing in mind that the Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City (hereafter “Gwangju Principles”) is an outcome of a series of consultation meetings held at the WHRCF held in 2012 and 2013 among local Korean and international experts,
11. Bearing in mind that the Gwangju Principles identifies key components of a human rights city in terms of values, principles, institutions, and policy implementation,
12. Recognizing that the Gwangju Principles is an instrument to deepen the commitments to the vision and commitments of the human rights city as articulated at the WHRCF in Gwangju, Korea since 2011,
13. Recognizing that the Gwangju Principles is a guide for policy-formulation to implement the Gwangju Human Rights Charter adopted in May 2012,
14. Recognizing that the Gwangju Principles is a living document that is to be implemented and revised progressively and regularly,

Hereby adopt the following principles as the Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City,

Principle 1: The Right to the City

- The Human Rights City respects all human rights recognized by the existing relevant international human rights norms and standards such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and national constitutions.
- The Human Rights City works towards the recognition and implementation of the right to the city in line with the principles of social justice, equity, solidarity, democracy and sustainability.

Principle 2: Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action

- The Human Rights City respects the principle of equality and equity among all habitants within its administrative boundary and beyond.
- The Human Rights City implements the non-discrimination policy which includes gender-sensitive policies as well as affirmative action to reduce inequality and to empower the marginalized and vulnerable groups including migrants and non-citizens.

Principle 3: Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

- The Human Rights City respects the values of social inclusion and cultural diversity based on mutual respect among communities of different racial, religious, linguistic, ethnic and social cultural backgrounds
- The Human Rights City applies a conflict-sensitive approach to promote cultural diversity which is essential for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Principle 4: Participatory Democracy and Accountable Governance

- The Human Rights City upholds the values of participatory democracy, transparency and accountability.
- The Human Rights City establishes effective accountability mechanisms ensuring rights to public information, communication, participation and decision in all stages of municipal governance including planning, policy-formulation, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Principle 5: Social Justice, Solidarity and Sustainability

- The Human Rights City respects the values of Socio-Economic justice and solidarity and ecological sustainability.
- The Human Rights City promotes social solidarity economy and sustainable consumption and production as a means to enhance socio-economic-ecological justice and solidarity among urban and rural communities within the country and beyond.

Principle 6 : Political Leadership and Institutionalization

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of collective high-level political leadership by the mayor and municipal councilors and their commitment to human rights values and vision of human rights city.
- The Human Rights City ensures a long-term continuity through institutionalization of adequately-resourced programs and budget.

Principle 7: Human Rights Mainstreaming

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of integrating human rights into municipal policies.
- The Human Rights City applies a human rights-based approach to municipal administration and governance including planning, policy-formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Principle 8: Effective Institutions and Policy Coordination

- The Human Rights City recognizes the role of public institutions and importance of policy coordination and coherence for human rights within local government as well as between national and local government.
- The Human Rights City establishes effective institutions and implements policies, with adequate personnel and resources including the human rights office, basic local action plan, human rights indicators and the human rights impact assessment.

Principle 9: Human Rights Education and Training

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of human rights education and learning as a means to foster a culture of human rights and peace.
- The Human Rights City develops and implements various types of human rights education and training programs for all duty bearers, right-holders and other stakeholders.

Principle 10: Right to Remedy

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of the right to effective remedy.
- The Human Rights City establishes appropriate mechanisms and procedures including the ombudsman or municipal human rights commission for redress including preventive measures as well as mediation, arbitration and conflict resolution.