

The 4th World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) 2014

Towards a Global Alliance of Human Rights Cities for All

15-18 May 2014

Gwangju, Republic of Korea

Concept Note

1. The 4th World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) will be held in Gwangju, Republic of Korea, from 15 to 18 May 2014 under the theme “Towards a Global Alliance of Human Rights Cities for All”.
2. The WHRCF is an annual meeting of key actors and stakeholders engaged in building a human rights city as a follow-up to three previous forums held since 2011 in order to implement the vision of a human rights city as articulated in the Gwangju Declaration on Human Rights City adopted on 17 May 2011 at the first WHRCF.
3. Under the theme “Towards a Global Alliance of Human Rights Cities for All”, the Forum aims to address the emerging challenges facing human rights cities and local governments on the ground such as poverty and rising inequality, unemployment and lack of productive and decent jobs, exclusion of migrants and minorities and vulnerable groups, gender injustice and discrimination, environmental pollution and climate chaos, privatization of land and public space, access to public information and transparency to name a few. To that end, several sessions will be organised to foster participatory sharing and analysis of various experiences and good practices.
4. The Forum is organized by the Metropolitan City of Gwangju in cooperation with Gwangju International Center and Korea Human Rights Foundation (KHRF) under the guidance of the WHRCF Promotion Committee composed of experts from various sectors and organizations with the support of co-sponsors such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Justice, National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK), the Asia Pacific Center for Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), and the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education.
5. About 500 participants both from Korea and abroad, mainly representatives from ‘human rights cities’, including members of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), human rights NGOs, grassroots community-based organizations, local parliamentarians, academics as well as UN human rights experts are expected to take part in the meeting.

Theme and Concept of ‘Human Rights City’ and the Right to the City

6. The theme “Towards a Global Alliance of Human Rights Cities for All” was chosen to highlight the importance of expanding the human rights cities’ movement worldwide in order to promote solidarity and mutual cooperation among them. It is believed that human rights mainstreaming through the human rights-based approach if rightly and fully implemented at all stages of a human

rights city including budgeting, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, can and must be a key to successful innovation to make a city a common space for solidarity for all beyond local and national boundaries.

7. The theme is in line with the concept of ‘human rights city’ as defined in 2011 WHRCF which is ‘both a local community and a socio-political process in the local context where human rights play a key role as the fundamental values and guiding principles’ based on the understanding of a “human rights city as human rights governance in the local context where local governments, local parliaments, civil society, private sector organizations and other stakeholders work together to improve the quality of life for all inhabitants in the spirit of partnership based on human rights standards and norms.”
8. The theme is also in line with the concept of the “right to the city” as defined in the 2012 1st World Summit of Local Governments for the Right to the City (Saint-Denis, France) as “the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, equality, solidarity and social justice”, a concept that should become a tangible reality not only in cities, but also in metropolitan regions, in close dialogue with social movements and civil society in general at local, national and global level.
9. From the European Charter of Human Rights in the City (2000) signed by more than 350 European towns and cities, to those of Montreal (2006), Mexico (2010), Gwangju (2012) and Vienna (2012) and through the adoption of the Global Charter-Agenda of Human Rights in the City (2011), adopted by UCLG, we are pleased to observe that for over 12 years, human rights have been increasingly inscribed in the agendas of local authorities from all over the globe.
10. However, further progress is still needed to make human rights a reality in our cities. According to the Gwangju Declaration on Human Rights City of 2011, human rights mainstreaming emphasizes the human rights-based approach where all inhabitants, regardless of race, sex, color, nationality, ethnic background and social status in particular minorities and any other vulnerable groups who are socially vulnerable and marginalized, can participate fully in the decision-making, policy-implementation and monitoring processes that affect their lives in accordance with human rights principles such as non-discrimination, rule of law, participation, empowerment, transparency and accountability.

Agenda and Program Structure

11. The meeting will have several types of sessions and activities: Opening Ceremony, Round Table, plenary sessions, workshops, technical visits and social and cultural tours. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French, Spanish and Korean will be provided in the Opening Ceremony, Opening Round Table and plenary session. The meeting will also offer the possibility to participants to organise side events, if they request it well in advance (the organisation will provide rooms, but not interpretation for them). Side events cannot be organised during the event sessions.

12. The Opening Round Table and Plenary sessions will count with the participation of high level representatives from cities, international organisations, civil society and academia from different regions of the world. These sessions will deal with the overall topic of the event from a holistic and strategic perspective in order to draw some lessons about human rights policy-making, monitoring and evaluation.
13. There will also be various workshops such as experts' workshop on local government and human rights (15 May), thematic workshops (16 and 17 May) and related special events throughout the Forum. As in previous editions of the WHRCF in 2012 and 2013, the Gwangju Asia Forum (GAF) , organized by the May 18 Foundation, will also take place providing a platform for CSOs and grassroots organizations from Asia to discuss various issues related to democracy and human rights.
14. The Experts' Workshop on Local Government and Human Rights will be held on 15 May with a number of UN human rights experts -including some members of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee (HRCAC)-, city representatives and human rights practitioners to provide inputs for the research paper according to the UN Human Rights Council's resolution (A/HRC/24/L.2) adopted on 26 September 2013 requesting "*the UN HRC Advisory Committee to prepare, a research-based report on the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights, including human rights mainstreaming in local administration and public services, with a view to compiling best practices and main challenges*". The HRCAC is expected to present a progress report to the UN HRC at its twenty-seventh session in September 2014. This workshop will be organized by the Korea Human Rights Foundation and relevant UN human rights bodies, with support from Metropolitan City of Gwangju. The Working Language will be English.
15. The Experts Workshop will also include a session on "Gwangju Guiding Principles for Human Rights City" which was adopted at the 3rd WHRCF on 17 May 2013. The Gwangju Principles will be finalized during this workshop with the implementation guidelines to be developed by participants.
16. Thematic workshops will be organized on 16 and 17 May 2014 simultaneously by local civil society organizations (CSOs) in Gwangju in cooperation with WHRCF Organizing Committee. Simultaneous translation in English and Korean will be provided and the following themes will be addressed:
 - State Violence and Impunity
 - Children and Youth
 - Gender and Women
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Persons with Disability
 - Ageing and older persons

17. There will also be several special events throughout the Forum which are as follows:

- Event 1 (17 May 2014): City Human Rights Tour.
- Event 2 (17 May 2014): Citizens' Rally on the Eve of May 18 People's Uprising organized by Citizens' Organizing Committee.
- Events 3 (18 May 2014): The 34th Commemorative Ceremony of May 18 Democratic Uprising at the May 18 National Cemetery organized by the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans' Affairs.

- 1) **Event 1 (14:00-16:00, 17 May): City Human Rights Tour** is to visit important sites in Gwangju to learn about human rights programs undertaken by the Metropolitan City of Gwangju and local CSOs such as Human Rights Metro Station, May 18 Democratic Movement Archive, Human Rights Office in the City Hall, 'human rights community project' etc.
- 2) **Event 2 (18:00-21:00, 17 May): Citizens' Rally on the Eve of May 18 People's Uprising** organized by the Citizens' Organizing Committee is to meet citizens of Gwangju in the spirit of historical justice and reconciliation in the historical streets where the people's uprising and bloody massacre took place in May 1980.
- 3) **Event 3 (09:00-12:00, 18 May): The 34th Commemorative Ceremony of the May 18 Democratic Uprising** is to remember the victims of the democracy movement and their sacrifices and contribution to democracy in Korea. It is held at the May 18 National Cemetery in the presence of the prime minister, cabinet members, key leaders of major political parties, and members of the National Assembly together with the family members of victims and citizens of the uprising.

18. Besides these events, the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG will organise a working meeting to discuss its Strategic Plan for the period 2014-2016 and brainstorm about the organisation of the 2nd World Summit of Local Governments for the Right to the City, to be held in 2015. All WHRCF participants are invited to join the discussion.

Gwangju Spirit and Commitment to Human Rights

19. The 2014 WHRCF is a sign of continued commitment of the people and the municipal government of Gwangju as well as an invitation to all like-minded mayors and human rights advocates to the vision of a Human Rights City for promoting solidarity and cooperation towards a universal culture of human rights beyond national and city boundaries among all urban residents and inhabitants. Gwangju is firmly committed to this vision as it is consistent with the Spirit of Gwangju for the 21st century.

Reference Documents

- 1) Gwangju Declaration on a Human Rights City of the WHRCF 2011(17 May 2011)
- 2) Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City (11 December 2011)
- 3) Gwangju Statement of WHRCF 2012 (17 May 2012)

- 4) Final Declaration of the 1st World Summit of Local Governments for the Right to the City (St Dennis, France, 12 December 2012)
- 5) Gwangju Statement of WHRF 2013 (17 May 2013)
- 6) Gwangju Guiding Principles for Human Rights City (17 May 2013)

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Program Structure and Schedule

Day	Time	Program and event
May 14 (Wed)		Early Arrival of Experts' Workshop Participants
May 15 (Thur.)	9:00-18:00	Experts' Workshop on "Local Government and Human Rights" and "Gwangju Principles for a Human Rights City" by KHRF and OHCHR
	18:00-20:00	Informal Welcome Reception
Day 1 May 16 (Fri.)	08:30-09:00	Registration
	09:00-11:00	Opening Ceremony of the 4 th WHRCF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welcome remarks ➤ Introduction of participants ➤ Introduction of program agenda Keynote speech: "The right to the city and the new urban agenda: how to move forward this new paradigm in Habitat III? <i>[debate with an INTERNATIONAL focus]</i>
	11:00-11:20	Break
	11:20-13:00	Opening Round Table "The right to the city and local governments: how can municipalities translate this right into local policies? <i>[debate with a LOCAL focus]</i>
	13:00-14:00	Lunch
	14:00-15:40	Plenary Session "How to become a human rights city? Human Rights municipal strategic planning and implementation" <i>[in this session speakers will discuss about PLANNING and IMPLEMENTING human rights strategies: charters, diagnosis, indicators, participatory follow-up committees,...]</i>
	15:40-16:00	Break

	16:00-18:00	1 st 2014 Biannual Meeting of the UCLG's Committee on Social, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights <i>Part 1 (discussion of 2014-2016 Strategic Plan)</i>	Thematic Workshop I <i>With interpretation in English and Korean</i> ▪ A: State Violence and Impunity
	18:30-20:30	Welcome Dinner hosted by Mayor of Gwangju	
Day 2 May 17 (Sat.)	09:00-12:30	1 st 2014 Biannual Meeting of the UCLG's Committee on Social, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights <i>Part 2 (brainstorming about the 2nd World Summit of Local Governments for the Right to the City)</i>	Thematic Workshop II (9:00-16:00) <i>With interpretation in English and Korean.</i> ▪ B : Children and Youth ▪ C : Persons with Disability ▪ D : Gender and Women ▪ E : Environmental Sustainability ▪ F : Ageing and older people
	12:30-14:00	Lunch	
	14:00-16:00	City Human Rights Tour (Event 1)	Thematic Workshop II (9:00-16:00) <i>With interpretation in English and Korean.</i> ▪ B : Children and Youth ▪ C : Persons with Disability ▪ D : Gender and Women ▪ E : Environmental Sustainability F : Ageing and older people
	17:00-18:00	Closing Ceremony	
	18:00-21:00	Citizens' Rally and Cultural Festival (Event 2)	
Day 3 May 18 (Sun.)	09:00-12:00	May 18 National Commemorative Ceremony (Event 3)	

- Opening ceremony, opening round table, plenary session with simultaneous interpretation in 4 languages(English, French, Spanish, Korean)