

World Human Rights City Forum 2018

Whom Do We Live With? Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Peace

18-21 October 2018

Gwangju, Republic of Korea

Background and Overview of the Forum

1. The 2018 World Human Rights Cities Forum (the 2018 Forum or WHRCF 2018 hereafter) is held as an annual event in Gwangju, South Korea every year in order to realize the vision of being a human rights city as articulated by the Gwangju Declaration of Human Rights Cities adopted during the WHRCF in May 2011. The WHRCF, from its inception, has constantly promoted the concept that both local and central governments need to be primary protectors of human rights in accordance with the principles set out in the 2011 Gwangju Declaration which defines human rights cities as facilitators of local community and socio-political processes in which human rights play key roles as fundamental values and guiding principles. At present, the WHRCF is recognized as a representative forum for human rights cities in Asia, whereby representatives of human rights cities, experts, NGOs, and concerned citizens gather to establish and implement effective systems to guarantee human rights at the local community level.

2. In the previous seven Forums there were a total of 1,124 presentations by 702 Korean and 422 international presenters from 76 countries respectively. Numerous human rights experts and activists shared their expertise and experiences in the past forums including LEE Heeho, Kim Dae Jung Peace Foundation Chief Director; Patricia Gatling, New York City Human Rights Commissioner; KANG Kyung-wha, Foreign Minister of South Korea; Getachew Engida, UNESCO Deputy Director-General; Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director; and Maria Lorena Zarate, President of the Habitat International Coalition among others.

3. The efforts of the WHRCF and the international human rights community have contributed to the 2015 report of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, which specifies the responsibility of both local and central governments as a protector of human rights. In particular, the Committee sets out to emphasize the role of local governments as service providers that should cater to the daily needs of citizens including their respective rights to education, health, housing,

environment, law and order, and drinking water among others. The WHRCF has discussed with local and international human rights experts regarding the specific contents of the Local Government and Human Rights Guidelines since 2014, and we will continue to lead efforts in contributing to the development and enforcement of the guidelines all the way up to the UN Human Rights Council by accordingly incorporating the results of our discussions.

4. The year of 2018 celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was created to serve as a benchmark for universal and international standards of human rights after the number of tragic human rights violations that had transpired during the two World Wars. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and the Program of Action adopted in 1993 to better implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the national level. The 2018 Forum is particularly significant this year as 2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the Asian Human Rights Charter declared in Gwangju in 1998. The Charter embodies the May 18 Spirit of Gwangju: democracy, human rights, and peace. Based on the achievements made by the international efforts to protect and promote human rights, the 2018 Forum will be a platform to reaffirm our commitment to the vision that local governments should play a major role along with central governments to realize and enhance universal human rights over the next 70 years. As it is also the 20 years of the launching of the European Charter of Human Rights in the City, it will also be a way to re-examine the charters, their achievements and how to update them with the new human's rights challenges we are facing in 2018.

5. The 2018 Forum will be held in the Kimdaejung Convention Center from October 18 to 21. This forum is expected to host more than 2,000 participants from Korea and abroad: government officials from cities implementing their own human rights cities, UN human rights experts, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) officers and members, NGOs, local councils, scholars, and stakeholders of human rights issues including children, women, and migrants.

Themes and the Korean and International Context

1. The 2018 Forum will delve into the issue of community by asking the question "Whom Do We Live With?" and approach this question with sub-topics of diversity, inclusiveness, and peace in mind. The awareness of our diverse neighbors can be the starting point of building a peaceful urban community, a community which recognizes the multiple identities of its citizens in the current global context. The 2018 Forum will also be the venue to discuss and explore ways to better implement the results of the two previous forums. The 2016 Forum saw citizens' rights in an urban space discussed alongside the theme of "Where Do We Live?". Furthermore, the 2017 Forum designated peace as the most important condition and value supporting human rights and democracy as discussed with the theme of "Do We Live in Peace?" These discussions will also

reaffirm that local governments are key actors to ensure inclusion and maintain social cohesion, in relation to the Global Compact on Migrations that will be adopted by the UN on December, 10-11th.

2. In May 1980, the citizens of Gwangju fought for principles of democracy and human rights and were subjected to state-sponsored violence in the process. They demonstrated their vision of great unity and concurrently embodied values of sharing and solidarity from May 21 to 27, 1980. This was despite the onslaught of terror and imminent risk of death as the city was encircled by tanks and troops. Citizens voluntarily shared rice balls with neighbors, donated blood to the injured, and protected and embraced one another. They willingly raised their voices and mobilized for causes of human dignity and democracy irrespective of each other's income level, age, gender, ideology, and religion. The spirit of Gwangju is connected to the concept of 'an inclusive city', which happened to be one of the main topics of Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development held in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016. Gwangju will make endless efforts to spread the Gwangju Spirit of democracy, human rights, and peace by upholding the value of diversity, inclusiveness, and solidarity.

3. Democracy and human rights are now in crisis due to the increase violence and lack of accountability against advocates of diversity and inclusiveness in many parts of the world. Thousands of suspects were executed on the spot without due process in the drug war declared by the Philippine government in June 2016. More than 700,000 Rohingya people have become refugees as a result of the massacre and other human rights violations by the Myanmar government forces since August 2017. Such state violence is not the only element threatening peace. Cases of violence subjected upon weak minority groups by mainstream majority groups are becoming all too common in our everyday lives, whether in the form of hate crimes or discrimination. In Korea, the Chungnam Provincial Council abolished their local human rights ordinance in April 2018, claiming that they encouraged homosexuality. Some Korean Christian groups are taking actions to repeal other human rights ordinances in other local governments. Hate crimes and discrimination continue against scores of Syrian refugees across Europe. Of course, these are just a few examples which show the overall diminishment of respect for diversity in addition to notions of inclusiveness for the socially disadvantaged such as refugees and sexual minorities.

4. The 2011 Gwangju Declaration for Human Rights Cities defines a human rights city as a municipality that accepts and supports socially marginalized and vulnerable minority groups regardless of race, sex, color, nationality, ethnicity and social status. Additionally, all citizens should be able to participate practically and fully in decision-making and policy-implementation processes which affect their lives in accordance with such human rights principles as non-discrimination, rule of law, empowerment, transparency and accountability. The core values of an

'inclusive city' accordingly are to incorporate the values of equality and respect and include minorities in all sectors of society. It is also important to secure both the demands of minorities and ensure their participation be included in concepts towards the right to development. Such measures are critical in order to implement equality in practical terms and are consistent with the UN SDG Goal 11 which states the need to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable." The 2018 Forum will provide sessions to conduct searches within various human rights cities to seek out solutions for promoting diversity, inclusiveness, and peace. Such sessions will focus on a variety of themes such as immigrants, refugees, the disabled, gender issues, state-sponsored violence, and village communities. Additional special sessions have been prepared to empower participants to raise their voices and discuss their own methods of solidarity. These include the Gwangju Global Congress for immigrants and the Right to Peace Session for various participants from cities that have suffered from state violence. It will also remind the importance to defend and guarantee the universality of Human Rights in the city, especially regarding migrants' situation.

Purpose and Objectives of the 2018 Forum

The 2018 Forum will explore the following questions in order to discuss concrete measures of spreading values of diversity, inclusiveness, and peace at the local community levels where we live.

1. The 2018 Forum aims to find practical alternatives in building a peaceful community by recognizing the identity of socially marginalized people in a human rights city with the theme of *Whom Do We Live With?* while inheriting the achievements of the 2017 Forum. To achieve this goal, the 2018 Forum is adding a Human Rights City session entitled the "International human rights policy session" with a case-study of the Spanish city of Barcelona, which has implemented civic autonomy and a democratic immigration policy to ensure diversity.

2. At the time of reconciliation after the summit of South and North Korean leaders, the 2018 Forum will deal with the Jeju Uprising, now at its 70th anniversary, whereby 30,000 innocent citizens were killed by national police and military forces over issues involving ideological confrontation between the two Koreas. We will accordingly talk about the role of human rights cities in building peace in the Northeast Asian region in the thematic session of 'City and Peace'.

3. WHRCF 2018 will add a new session entitled the 'Asian Human Rights Cities Network' in preparation for launching a new human rights cities network of Asian cities planned to span across Korea, Indonesia, Nepal, East Timor, the Philippines, and India. Participating cities will be interested in creating a regional network for human rights cities to share information regarding

human rights policies as well as institutions so as to take collective action on pressing human rights issues.

4. based on the achievements of the Forum over the past two years, the 2018 Forum will explore ways to strengthen the foundation for the implementation of human rights policy at the local government level. Additionally, the 2018 forum will seek out methods to better incorporate the local governments in Korea by empowering human rights cities officers and human rights committees within the metropolitan cities of Korea.

5. The 2018 Forum will have an in-depth discussion on a new vision for local governments, envisioning cities as agents for implementing universal human rights alongside the central government. This new concept also includes aspirations to create measures for implementation of such goals for the next 70 years in lieu of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, and the 20th anniversary of the Asian Declaration of Human Rights promulgated in Gwangju in 1998. Regarding the Global Compact on Migrations, it will defend the recognition of local governments' role in international governance and policies about Migrations as the implementation of multilevel mechanism.

Agenda and Program Structure

1. Following the opening ceremony, the 2018 Forum will hold an opening round table with members from the Human Rights Council, international human rights experts, and representatives of human rights cities. The plenary session will discuss actions to be taken regarding the theme of the forum with both Korean and international experts, activists, and other groups concerned with protecting human rights. During the closing ceremony, the 2018 World Human Rights Cities Forum Declaration will be adopted.

2. The thematic sessions will be comprised of ten sub-sessions: immigrants/refugees, the disabled, the elderly, children, women, state-sponsored violence, the environment, peace, and social economy, all of which are closely related to ordinary citizens' daily lives. In particular, the 2018 Forum will have a new session on 'City and Peace' to discuss the right to peace for cities which accommodate military bases on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Jeju April Uprising.

3. For the policy discussion, the policies will be introduced from the city of Barcelona on immigrants, religious diversity, and democratic autonomy in the "Policy Session of Human Rights Cities Abroad". Additionally, human rights city officials from Korean local governments will gather to have a dialogue in the "Policy Session of Korean Human Rights Cities".

4. As a special Session, the preparatory meeting for the 'Asia Human Rights Cities Network I,II' will take place with representatives from cities that have suffered from state-sponsored violence: Korea, Nepal, East Timor, the Philippines, and Indonesia. For the domestic session, a meeting of the 'Local Governments Human Rights Network' and the 'Local Governments Human Rights Commission Workshop' will be conducted.

5. Immigrants in Gwangju and migrant rights advocacy groups will participate in the Gwangju Global Congress as well as the Human Rights Paper Presentation. In addition, the plaza 'Agora' will be made available so that visitors can freely share their thoughts and talk amongst one another. An assortment of other side events will be arranged such as the 5.18 Archives and Trauma Center tour, a visit to the May Uprising National Cemetery, and the Gwangju Biennale tour. English-Korean simultaneous interpretations will be provided for the opening ceremony, the opening round table, all plenary sessions, and all thematic sessions.

6. A special session will be hold in co-partnership with the Committee on Social Inclusion, Human Rights and Participatory Democracy of UCLG about the international agenda on Migrations and how to guarantee the universality of Rights for all, independently of administrative status.

Host, Organizers, and Sponsors

1. The 2018 Forum is co-hosted by the Gwangju Metropolitan City and the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education. The forum is co-organized by the Gwangju International Center (GIC) and UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy, & Human Rights (UCLG-CISDP).

2. This forum is sponsored by the following Korean government departments and international organizations: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - Republic of Korea, Korea Human Rights Foundation, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU).