UCLG Committee | Social Inclusion Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

Global Campaign

"10, 100, 1000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030"

This Global Campaign aims at gathering 1000 local and regional governments (LRGs) from all over the world by 2030 to strengthen the global movement of Human Rights Cities and Territories. It was launched by the Copresidency of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) and with the support of other active members of the network.

What is a Human Rights City or Territory?

> *"A Human Rights city is both a local community and a socio-political process in a local context where human rights play a key role as fundamental values and guiding principles."*
>
> Gwangju Declaration on Human Right City
> World Human Rights Cities Forum, 2011

At the international level, the ratification of Human rights has been a key achievement of the last century to advance towards a world of peace and social progress for all. Since then, our world has become more globalized and urbanized, leading **local and regional governments (LRGs) to become essential places for the promotion and fulfillment of human rights**.

The implementation of international human rights law is both a responsibility of local and regional governments and an opportunity to act on behalf of their inhabitants, to respond to their needs and aspirations and to ensure dignity for all. In the past years, several LRGs throughout the world have taken initiatives to **make human rights tangible and accessible to their inhabitants** through local action against discrimination and inequalities, by ensuring access to essential services like housing, access to water, public health, food security and education. From the rural areas to the largest metropolises, **every city and territory is critical for and actively contributes to human rights protection; promotion; and advancements globally.**

Becoming a Human Rights City or Territory represents a **commitment to improve the living conditions** of all inhabitants but also to **define new modalities of public action**, enhancing the role of LRG to build inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies, recognizing the needs of specific groups (children, women, older persons, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, people in all its diversities etc).

Through the adoption of local human rights charters, the establishment of local ombudspersons and human rights commissioners, the creation of non-discrimination offices, and the promotion of a human rights culture, local and regional governments (LRGs) are spearheading new approaches to the vision of "Human Rights Cities and Territories." In doing so, they reaffirm **the essential role of public services** in ensuring that no one and no place are left behind.

By advancing human rights as a **driver of transformation and empowerment** to renew the social and territorial contract with local communities, Human Rights Cities and Territories also **reaffirm the importance of the democratic pillar**. This includes fostering the participation of inhabitants, as well as strengthening collaboration with civil society and its organisations.

The significance of these social and democratic dimensions has been further reinforced through the **"Right to the City."** Recognised in the New Urban Agenda of UN-Habitat and adopted by UCLG at its Bogotá Congress in 2016, this concept has brought a new territorial dimension to human rights. By linking individual rights, collective rights and the common good, "the Right to the City is the right of all inhabitants, present and future, permanent and temporary, to inhabit, use, occupy, produce, govern and enjoy just, inclusive, safe and sustainable cities, towns and human settlements, conceived as essential commons for a full and dignified life." (Global Platform for the Right to the City).

The New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City now gives concrete shape to this commitment, setting out 37 human rights in the city — each accompanied by practical recommendations for local action.

Key milestones of the global movement of Human Rights Cities

Before 2012	Adoption of several **local Charters and Declarations** (Barcelona, Gwangju, Mexico City, Montreal, New York, Rosario, Saint-Denis, San Francisco, Vienna)
2012	Adoption of the **UCLG Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**
2013	**First resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council** on "***The role of local governments in the promotion and protection of human rights***"
2014	**Gwangju Guiding Principles of Human Rights City** at the World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF)
2016	**Recognition of the "Right to the City" by UCLG** and **in the New Urban Agenda of UN Habitat**
2018	Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the European Charter of Human Rights in the City, the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and 70 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
2019	**First meeting in Geneva between the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and 15 local government representatives**

2020	**First High-Level Dialogue between UCLG and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** (OHCHR) during the World Human Rights Cities Forum of Gwangju
2021	Signature of a **cooperation agreement between UCLG and the OHCHR** on the occasion of the UCLG World Council
2022	Launch of the **global campaign "10, 100, 1000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030"** under the slogan "**Building universality through local diversity**" + beginning of the **update of UCLG Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**
2023	"Launch of the second wave of the campaign, under the slogan **"Enabling dignity for all"**
2024	Launch of the third wave of the campaign, under the slogan: **"Pioneering Local Public Policies to Uphold Dignity for All"**
2025	**Second High-Level Dialogue between UCLG and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** (OHCHR) **with more than 50 representatives from LRGs, society organizations and academia** in Geneva
2025	Launch of the Campaign's Online Hub + Launch of the fourth wave of the Campaign, under the slogan **"Strengthening Local Public Services for Just and Caring Cities"**
2026	**Launch and adoption of the New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City, during the UCLG Congress in Tangier**

Why launching a Global Campaign of Human Rights Cities and Territories?

Objetive 1	**Strengthen and expand the global movement of Human Rights Cities and Territories**
Objetive 2	**Scale up local actions on human rights** to foster recognition and participation of local and regional governments in human rights global agendas and mechanisms, including at UN level
Objetive 3	**Encourage local and regional governments to initiate processes for the adoption and recognition of local human rights frameworks to guide their action**
Objetive 4	**Connect local initiatives at the international level** to promote solidarity, cooperation and dialogue between human-rights cities/territories from different regions of the world

The campaign follows the historic signing of a collaboration agreement between UCLG and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2021.

The first step of the Campaign was to gather 100 cities and territories that are working on or wishing to act on human rights on the occasion of the UCLG Congress in Daejeon and during the World Human Rights Cities Forum of Gwangju (10 - 14 October 2022, Republic of Korea) one year after the signing of the agreement with the OHCHR.

The campaign is closely linked to two flagship instruments of the Committee, both of which have now been completed and together anchor the next stage of the movement. The first is the **New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**, which updates the original **Global Charter-Agenda** adopted in 2011 and was adopted at the UCLG World Congress in Tangier on 25 June 2026. It reaffirms local and regional governments as duty-bearers and recognizes 37 human rights in the city across seven clusters — from essential services to equality and non-discrimination — together with the rights of cities themselves as duty- and rights-bearing actors, and offers concrete recommendations for local action for each right. The second is the **Guidance Framework for Creating a Human Rights City**, published in 2025 **in collaboration with the OHCHR**, which provides a structured methodology for embedding human rights into local governance — from rights-based budgeting to establishing human rights structures within city administrations. Together, these instruments give the campaign both a shared direction and practical tools for implementation.

For more information on these processes, contact the secretariat of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG: cisdp1@uclg.org

Why integrate Human Rights into local action?

Human rights are both challenges and enablers for achieving a just, democratic and sustainable world in the face of systemic economic, social, political and ecological crises. At the international level, human rights are at the center of the New Urban Agenda, the UN 2030 Agenda - which seeks "to realize the human rights of all" - and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Human rights are also a source of inspiration for inclusion and social innovation, creating new areas of action to respond to local demands and realities, ranging from intercultural dialogue, peace and the protection of inhabitants from state repression, climate action, energy independence or digital rights. **Human rights have become the added value that allows local administrations to assert themselves as political actors, as local governments addressing the demands and accompanying aspirations of their inhabitants.**

Human rights provide a framework for recognizing innovative local government initiatives and practices. Linking innovative practices to international human rights values and laws contributes to their legitimation, normalization and institutionalization. Institutionalization facilitates the dissemination of these practices in other contexts and at different scales of government; while opening avenues for reflection on the sustainability of local action, and **on the type of legacy that local and regional governments are willing to prepare for their inhabitants in the future**. The New Global Charter-Agenda offers

cities a common language for exactly this**: a way to name, localize and monitor rights, while respecting the diversity of local contexts and trajectories.**

How to join the campaign?

Cities and territories wishing to join the campaign are invited to express their interest to the Secretariat of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (UCLG-CISDPDH), complete the participation form, and submit it to: cisdp1@uclg.org.

The campaign is open to local and regional governments worldwide of all sizes, from all types of jurisdictions and with previous experience or willing to commit to human rights.