

2012 World Human Rights Cities Forum

15-18 May 2012,
Gwangju, Republic of Korea

Gwangju Statement 2012

We, participants of the 2012 World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF),

1. Recalling the spirits and commitments in the Gwangju Declaration on Human Rights City adopted on 17 May 2011 at the 2011 World Human Rights Cities Forum,
2. Congratulating the Metropolitan City of Gwangju on their successful implementation of the resolution to organize the 2012 WHRCF,
3. Expressing our deep appreciation to the Metropolitan City of Gwangju for their generous hospitality and services shown during the 2012 WHRCF,
4. Welcoming the adoption of the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City on 11 December 2011 at the Governing Council of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG),
5. Welcoming the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training on 19 December 2011 at the UN General Assembly,
6. Welcoming the convening of the International Conference of UNESCO's Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific as part of the 2012 WHRCF,
7. Welcoming and recognizing youth participation in the form of Global Human Rights City Essay Contest and local NGOs at the 2012 WHRCF,
8. Congratulating the Metropolitan City of Gwangju on the inclusion of the Archives for the May 18th Democratic Uprising in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register on the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the May 18th Democratic Uprising (the Gwangju Democratization Movement),
9. Welcoming and recognizing progress made in Gwangju toward a human rights city including the adoption of human rights indicators and Gwangju Human Rights Charter, the first of its kind in Korea,
10. Aware that a human rights city is both a local community and a socio-political process in the local context where human rights play a key role as fundamental values and guiding principles,
11. Bearing in mind that the human rights city is a shared human rights governance in the local context where local government, local parliament (council), civil society, private sector and other stakeholders cooperate together to improve quality of life for all people in the spirit of partnership based on human rights standards and norms,

12. Reaffirming the importance of the human rights-based approach to local governance including the principle of democracy, participation, responsible leadership, transparency, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment and rule of law,
13. Emphasizing the importance to secure broad participation of all actors and stakeholders in particular marginalized and vulnerable groups,
14. Emphasizing the importance of effective and independent human rights protection and monitoring mechanisms to which all people have recourse,
15. Recognizing the importance of inter-local and inter-national cooperation and solidarity among cities engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights,

Hereby adopt the following commitments;

- 1) To further our collaborative efforts to making the vision of a human rights city a reality on the ground by developing guiding principles ("Gwangju Compact/Principles") and implementation guidelines for a human rights city,
- 2) To promote and implement the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City as a strategic tool to globalize human rights from below, in cooperation with the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and International Permanent Secretariat Human Rights and Local Governments (SPIDH),
- 3) To promote the vision of a human rights city in Asia and the Pacific through cooperation with like-minded cities, in particular, UNESCO's Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO's Asia Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) and interested academic institutions and civil society,
- 4) To participate, together with human rights advocates and civil society organizations like CIVICUS in the movement for a human rights city as a means to promote people-centered participatory and inclusive governance both globally and locally,
- 5) To call upon the UN human rights bodies, in particular, UN Human Rights Council and its Advisory Committee (HRCAC) and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to take up the issue of human rights city as their priority agenda and work plans, and

In conclusion,

We recommend that the Metropolitan City of Gwangju continue to play a leadership role by convening the World Human Rights Cities Forum in 2013 as a space of international multi-stake holder dialogue and reflection on a human rights city.

Gwangju, 17 May 2012