



HUMAN RIGHTS CITY GWANGJU



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Human Rights City



Concept

The phrase "Human Rights City" refers to a city where the citizens and the residents of the city work together in order to enhance the quality of life of all who live in the city, based on a spirit of partnership fostered by the city's human rights' rules and standards. In addition, in a "Human Rights City", the city's residents, including any less-privileged groups and/or minorities who may be socially marginalized, are entitled to participate in policy-making and the implementation of the policies which affect their lives. This should be done in accordance with an anti-discrimination principle that no resident should be the subject of discrimination of any kind based on race, gender, cultural background or social status. Furthermore, the rule of law should always apply, as well as the principles of participation, self-independence, transparency, and responsibility for human rights.



Development of a Human Rights City

The responsibilities to protect and promote human rights have been extended from the central governmental level to the municipal level, allowing the local governments to become active players on the international stage regarding human rights enhancement efforts.

In this regard, to create a community where citizens can live in happiness, the local governments should ensure that all residents and citizens should not be discriminated against in any way based on race, religion, nationality, region of birth or economic and social status, and can both enjoy freedom and live in dignity.

International Cooperation and Solidarity

To protect human rights and uphold the world peace, the Gwangju Metropolitan City Government continues to strengthen cooperative partnership with other cities valuing human rights and pursuing to become a human rights city. In addition, it also actively joins forces in realizing the founding philosophy of human rights-related international organizations such as the UN and UNESCO.



Gwangju, Human Rights City



A Tradition of Valuing Human Rights

At every historic moment when Korea faced challenges, the people of Gwangju stood at the forefront against injustice and for human dignity. During the Donghak Agrarian Movement (1894), the Gwangju Student Independence Movement (1929), the April 19 Revolution (1960) which felled a corrupt dictatorship, and the May 18 Democratic Uprising (1980) against the illegitimate governmental violence imposed upon the City of Gwangju.



Inscription of the Archives of May 18 Democratic Uprising in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register

The Archives of Gwangju's May 18 Democratic Uprising was inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register on May 25, 2011, thanks to the effort of the City Government, Inscription Promotion Committee, The May 18 Memorial Foundation, and the bereaved families of the victims. As a result, the value and legacy of the May Uprising, which represents democracy, human rights and peace, has now come to be recognized as a historic record of the world. The Gwangju's World Documentary Heritage will serve as a guideline for human rights education and will promote universal values such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law and will help to pursue justice across the planet.



International Cooperation and Exchanges in the Area of Human Rights

Since the May 18 Democratic Uprising, in the name of democracy and human rights in Asia, Gwangju has developed and implemented supportive policies for civic groups and activists, as well as for victims who have been in difficult situations.

In addition, the city has also maintained its efforts to promote human rights at an international level and strengthen its network with other cities at home and abroad by holding a wide range of international cultural and academic conferences (e.g., 2006 Gwangju Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, 2007 World Women's Peace Forum Gwangju) and by participating in forums such as the International Conference of UNESCO Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific (April 2011), the Hiroshima Mayors for Peace Conference (August 2011), and the UN Global Compact (August 2011).



A Sound Foundation for Human Rights

The Gwangju City Government opened a Human Rights Office within the city government's organization for the first time at the municipal level and mapped out a Human Rights City framework that suggests visions, strategies and action plans for a Human Rights City.

The Gwangju City Government established the Gwangju Charter of Human Rights City, which will serve as a community standard in practice, as well as a blueprint for future Human Rights Cities in order to achieve a multi-dimensional democracy. In addition, based on the concept of the Charter, it also established its Human Rights Ordinance to ensure that its citizens' human rights will be continuously promoted.

The Gwangju City Government has developed Human Rights Indicators meeting characteristics of the city to measure the attainability of human rights goals, has established five year plans and targets, and has implemented the concepts embedded in the Indicators by investigating and evaluating the actual situations of human rights issues and improving the situations when needed.



2012 World Human Rights Cities Forum

Background

There have been requests from cities and organizations which participated in the "2011 World Human Rights Cities Forum" to make the Forum an annual conference. Seeking to spread the spirit of democracy, human rights and peace and to enhance city-to-city collaboration and exchanges with national and international human rights organizations, human rights cities and civil society organizations at home and abroad, the Gwangju City Government decided to hold the 2012 World Human Rights Cities Forum.



Overview



- Period: May 15th to 18th, 2012 (4 Days)
- Venue: Kimdaejung Convention Center, City Hall and others
- Theme: City and Human Rights
- Hosted by: Gwangju City Government
- Organized by: World Human Rights Cities Forum Promotion Committee (The May 18 Memorial Foundation, Gwangju Development Institute, Korea Human Rights Foundation, Law Center for Public Human Rights at Chonnam National University, Gwangju Convention & Visitors Bureau)
- Sponsored by: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, The Ministry of Justice, The National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea, UNOHCHR, Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding under the auspices of UNESCO (APCEIU), UNESCO Office in Bangkok, Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education and others

Organizers and Forum Sessions



- International Symposium on Human Rights Cities:
 - Presentations and Discussions by Theme-based Sessions
 - Session I Institutional Mechanisms to Create Human Rights Cities (organized by Gwangju Development Institute)
 - Session II Guidelines to become a Human Rights City (organized by Korea Human Rights Foundation)
- Gwangju Asia Forum (organized by the May 18 Memorial Foundation)
- Special International Conference
 - International Conference of UNESCO Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific (organized by UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education)
 - UNESCO Conference of Cities with Democracy and Human Rights-related Archives that have been inscribed in the Memory of the World Register (organized by May 18 Archive Promotion Committee)
 - Human Rights Cities' Challenges Ahead (organized by the Institute for Social Development and Policy Research at Seoul National University, Korea Human Rights Foundation)
 - College Students Participating Program
 - "Dream Human Rights Cities Open Competition: If I were a mayor, my human rights city will be..."
 - Human Rights NGO Conference (organized by NGO Planning Team)
- Side Events
 - "Meet with Korea NGOs" & Pre-opening Session (organized by Law Center for Public Human Rights at Chonnam National University)
 - Congratulatory performances and exhibition