

2013 World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF)

“Sustainable Human Right City for All:
Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City”

15-18 May 2013,
Gwangju, Republic of Korea

Concept Note

(Draft Version 2, 1 November 2012)

1. The 2013 World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) is an annual meeting of key stakeholders engaged in building a human rights city as a follow-up to two previous forums held in 2011 and 2012 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.
2. Under the theme “Sustainable Human Rights City for All: Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City”, it aims to address the emerging challenges identified by key actors including mayors, civil servants, policy makers, local councillors, civil society actors, academics and other stakeholders in the process of making a human rights city a reality on the grounds of their own context with a special focus on effective institution building and mechanisms including guiding principles for a human rights city based on the sharing and analysis of various experiences and good practices
3. The 2013 WHRCF will be organized by the Metropolitan City of Gwangju in cooperation with the May 18 Memorial Foundation and Korea Human Rights Foundation under the guidance of the WHRCF Promotion Committee composed of the May 18 Memorial Foundation, May 18 Institute with the support of co-sponsors such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), Ministry of Justice, National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK), Korea National Commission for UNESCO and Asia Pacific Center for Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), and the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education.
4. Approximately, several hundred participants mainly composed of representatives from ‘human rights cities’, UN human rights experts, civic and human rights NGOs, local parliamentarians, as well as academics both from Korea and abroad are expected to take part in the 2013 Forum to share their rich experiences and expertise on various aspects of human rights city.
5. A number of UN human rights experts and members of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee (HRCAC) will be invited to attend as they are expected to work on the research paper on ‘local government and human rights’ as decided by the UN Human Rights Council in September 2012 which will include the Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City
6. Mayors and representatives of cities that have accepted the ‘Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City’ adopted in Florence, Italy on 11 December 2011 at the Governing

Council of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) as an agenda for action as well as members of the UNESCO International Coalition of Cities Against Discrimination will also be invited to join the 2013 WHRCF.

Theme and Concept of ‘Human Rights City’

7. The theme “Sustainable Human Rights City for All: Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City” was chosen to highlight the importance of effective institution-building to make human rights city sustainable and relevant to the needs of ordinary citizens and inhabitants. Institutions such as a human rights office, citizens’ commission, ombudsman, to name a few, are effective instruments to make human rights accessible to all inhabitants in the city. It is believed that human rights mainstreaming through the human rights-based approach at all stages of a human rights city including budgeting, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is very crucial to make those institutions inclusive and effective.
8. 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 societies, 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.”
9. 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 and policy-implementation 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

10. The 2013 WHRCF will be mainly composed of a main workshop and thematic workshops on various aspects of human rights cities (16 May) as well as special sessions organized by the organizing committee. The special sessions will be organized by participating organizations specifically UCLG Asia Pacific, UNESCO Human Rights Archive Network, Working Group on Guideline for Human Rights City and Gwangju Asia Forum (17 May).
11. Besides the above-mentioned sessions, there will be three special events which are as follows;
 1. Event 1(15 May 2013): the 2nd Annual Global Essay Contest for Human Rights City

2. Event 2 (17 May 2013): Citizens' Rally on the Eve of May 18 People's Uprising organized by Citizens' Organizing Committee
 3. Events 3 (18 May 2013) : 33rd Commemorative Ceremony of May 18 Democratic Uprising at the May 18 National Cemetery (to be attended by National President)
 4. Event 4 (18 May 2013) : Gwangju Prize for Human Rights
12. Event 1: the 2nd Annual Global Essay Contest for Human Rights is to promote youth participation in building a human rights city by inviting them to share their ideas and experiences on how to better implement the vision of a human rights city in the different local and municipal contexts. Selected finalists both domestically and internationally are to be invited to make a presentation before a panel of judges.
 13. Event 2: Citizens' Rally on the Eve of May 18 People's Uprising organized by Citizens' Organizing Committee is to meet citizens of Gwangju in the spirit of historical justice and reconciliation in the historical streets where people's uprising and bloody massacre took place in May 1980.
 14. Event 3: The 33rd 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 and the newly elected national President together with cabinet members and leaders of major political parties are to attend.
 15. Event 4: Gwangju Prize for Human Rights is an international award given to a person who has demonstrated outstanding performance for the advancement of human rights with an award of 50,000 USD.
 16. All participants are expected to join event 2, 3 and 4 as they are crucial in understanding the historical background of the WHRCF, especially the reason why Gwangju city is committed to be a human rights city and the WHRCF. Some participants may be invited to join the panel of judges at the essay contest to be held on May 15, 2013.

Gwangju Spirit and Commitment to Human Rights

17. The 2013 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.

2013 WHRCF Program Structure and Schedule

Day		Time	Program and event
Day 1 (Wed. May 15)	Morning		Arrival
	Afternoon	14:00- 18:00	2nd Global Human Rights City Essay Contest
	Evening	18:30- 20:00	Informal Welcome Reception
Day 2 (Thur. May 16)	Morning	09:00- 10:30	Opening Ceremony Keynote speeches
		11:00- 12:30	Opening High-level Panel
	Afternoon	12:30- 14:00	Lunch
		14:00- 16:00	Main Workshop I: Human Rights Cities – from Vision to Practice (3-4 cases) Workshop A : Past State Violence Workshop B : Human Rights Institutions and Policies Workshop C : Complaints and Remedy Procedures Workshop D : Human Rights Education
		16:00- 18:00	Thematic Workshop II: Workshop A : City and Public Architecture Workshop B : City and Ecological Sustainability Workshop C : City and Disability Workshop D : City and Gender Workshop E : City and Children / Youth
		18:30- 21:00	Welcome Dinner hosted by Mayor of Gwangju
Day 3 (Fri. May 17)	Morning	09:00- 12:30	Network Session and Working Group A: Working Group on Guidelines for Human Rights Cities B: UCLG ASPAC C: UNESCO World Record Heritage – Human Rights Network D: Gwangju Asia Forum
	Afternoon	12:30- 14:00	Lunch
		14:00-	Continued

Day		Time	Program and event
		16:00	
		16:00-17:00	Closing Ceremony
	Evening	18:00-21:00	Citizens' Rally and Cultural Festival
Day 4 (Sat. May 18)	Morning	09:00-12:00	May 18 National Commemorative Ceremony
	Afternoon	12:00-17:00	Cultural Tour