

Concept Note

“Human Rights Cities Responding to Poverty and Inequalities”

Background

The world has made efforts to reduce poverty and raise shared prosperity to leave no one behind. However, the global poverty rate and inequalities have rapidly increased again at a historical level due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UN warned that over 600 million, one in every 14 people, could live in extreme poverty by 2030.¹ Furthermore, the combination of the climate crisis and the war in Ukraine has exacerbated the issue of poverty and inequalities in more complex ways than previously.

Poverty from income perspective does not reflect the depth of suffering of people, as it does not just mean a shortage of resources to live on. It is a ‘human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights’.² Inequalities in urban areas are rising in the use of urban infrastructure and services, which has led to the discrimination and exclusion of individuals from civil and political rights. Growing inequalities and discrimination are both causes and consequences of poverty.

Poverty and inequalities are harming the sustainability of cities and jeopardizing the rights of people. The issue of poverty and inequalities is not the outcome of a natural phenomenon, but the result of problems caused by economic, social, cultural and political structures we live in. In addition, its negative impacts are exacerbated by perpetuating poverty and inequalities from one generation to the next.³

Accordingly, human rights cities, experts and activists have made it the top priority to analyze the problems of poverty and inequalities from the economic, social, cultural and political perspectives, and then to establish legal, policy and practical measures to address these challenges through a human rights-based approach.

¹ [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022](#)

² [Statement Adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 4 May 2001 \(E/C.12/2001/10\)](#)

³ [Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights \(A/76/177\)](#)



Theme

The theme of ‘Human Rights Cities Responding to Poverty and Inequalities’ will help the participants of the 13th World Human Rights Cities Forum to focus on the recent human rights issues and major problems caused by poverty and inequalities through a human rights-based approach. The diverse experiences of participating cities will help our effort to find miscellaneous causes leading to poverty and inequalities. Our main interest lies in discussing and preparing the systems and policies that strengthen the foundation of human rights cities that aim for inclusion and coexistence against poverty and inequalities.

Main Agenda

In the 13th World Human Rights Cities Forum, local governments, international organizations, human rights experts, and future generations will come together to discuss ‘Human Rights Cities Responding to Poverty and Inequalities’, focusing on the following four issues.

First, how are poverty and inequalities connected with human rights?

We will clarify the interdependent relationship between poverty and inequalities and then human rights after structuring the concepts of systemic poverty, new poverty, and inequalities. At the same time, we will recognize why human rights cities should use a human rights-based approach in addressing poverty and inequalities for the sake of fostering social justice and inclusion.

Second, what are the current human rights agenda and issues arising from poverty and inequalities?

We will find at the local level how poverty and inequalities impact human rights by analyzing the causes of the deprivation and exclusion of economic, social, cultural and political opportunities and the increasing challenges such as racism and discrimination.

Third, what are the new strategies and measures of human rights cities to respond to poverty and inequalities?

We will look at the policy implementation experiences of participating cities such as administrative and political strategies responding to complex human rights issues of various demographic groups, including youth and women, caused by the structuralization of poverty and inequalities.



Fourth, how can we enhance the human rights solidarity among human rights cities to respond to poverty and inequalities?

We will also explore the ways of collaboration in finding effective human rights-based approaches at the local level to reduce poverty and inequalities, while at the same time exploring common implementation strategies at the global level so that these can be reflected in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in the resolutions of the UN Governing Bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council and not least in the shaping of a New Social Contract.

