

## Human Rights Paper Session I

# Developing Human Rights based Solutions for Sustainable, Inclusive and Climate-Resilient Cities

Oct 12, 2022 (Wed) 9:30-12:00

Organizers: Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI), Chonnam National University BK21 FOUR The Education & Research Program for Fostering Cultural Memory  
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### Background

Cities are rising. More than half of the world's population currently lives in urban areas, a figure that is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. In order to meet the many challenges that will arise as a direct result of this upward trajectory, cities are claiming new roles in governance by positioning themselves as Human Rights Cities, Cities of Refuge, Climate-friendly cities, or cities that work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Cities are essential components in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, SDG No. 11 calls for making cities and urban settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, to deal with “acute challenges in managing rapid urbanization — from ensuring adequate housing and infrastructure to support growing populations, to confronting the environmental impact of urban sprawl, [and] to reducing vulnerability to disasters.” The intersection between the SDGs and human rights provides a unique opportunity to guide priority-setting, decision-making, and policy implementation in cities. In fact, as defined by the *Gwangju Declaration on Human Right City (2011)*, 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”.

### Objective

Within this conceptual framework, the 12th WHRCF will focus on the theme of “Climate Change and Human Rights”, recognizing climate change as one of the biggest threats to human rights and a sustainable future. Human rights and environmental responses to this threat need to be global too. The enjoyment of human rights depends on the existence of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In addition, climate change poses a direct threat to the enjoyment of a sustainable environment and, consequently, to the enjoyment of human rights. Based on these premises, this human rights paper session will critically analyse and discuss the role of cities in contributing with human rights-based solutions for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient cities.



## Main agenda

We are inviting researchers, PhD candidates, practitioners, activists, and graduate students to present papers related to “Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change: Developing human rights-based solutions for sustainable, inclusive and climate-resilient cities.”

We are welcoming papers critically analysing the role of cities and local authorities in developing human rights-based solutions for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient cities and focusing on the following topics:

1. Major human rights issues linked to climate change and the environment that municipalities and local authorities have the competence and the responsibility to deal with: Papers could identify the substantive correlation between climate change and human rights and to determine the role of cities and local authorities in dealing with human rights issues in various areas such as the environment, economy, education, culture, and housing, both for current and future generations.
2. Human rights-based approaches to deal with the effects of climate change: Papers could identify and critically analyse which human rights-based approaches (HRBAs) have been used by local authorities and governments through the introduction of measures addressing the negative effect of climate change.
3. Climate change, inclusiveness and vulnerability: Papers could analyse the role of cities and local authorities in safeguarding and meeting the needs of groups in situations of vulnerability, such as the elderly, women, the disabled, the youth and children, immigrants, etc., in connection with the negative effects of climate change, environmental degradation and pollution. In addition, papers could explore the existence of accommodative responses that facilitate the access to these sectors of the population to essential services (e.g., sanitation, clean and safe water, etc.) that could facilitate their enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
4. Taking innovative actions to counter climate change and promoting a safe, clean and healthy environment. Papers could identify and critically analyse how local authorities’ interventions- or lack thereof—could prevent or mitigate the negative effects of climate change affecting the access to a safe, clean, and healthy environment at local levels and contributing to develop climate-resilient cities.



5. Capacity building programmes targeting LAs' officials on climate change, human rights and the environment: Papers could identify and critically analyse the capacity development programmes and actions put in place by LAs in order to guarantee the adequate level of competences among state officials to deal with climate change and access to safe, clean and healthy environment.
6. Promoting international cooperation and solidarity to cope with climate change: Papers could explore the role of local authorities and governments in sharing information and practical experiences to protect human rights and in contributing to the developments of principles and guidelines for cooperation and joint practices at local and global levels.



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