

Final Report

International Conference of the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination Creative Cities for Glocal (Global + Local) Security and Peace

15-18 May 2012

City Hall, Gwangju Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea

Introduction

The International Conference of the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination was organized by the Gwangju Metropolitan City, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and the Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP), UNESCO Bangkok. In order to make further advancement to the elimination of discrimination in policies and practices and develop concrete activities for the UNESCO Coalition of Cities against Discrimination.

The Conference themes were: “Creative Cities for Glocal (Global + Local) Security and Peace”, with sub-themes: 1. Human Rights and Cities; 2. Social Inclusion; 3. Cities and Global Environment Change. The aim of the conference was to provide a forum for governors, mayors and local governments in Asia and the Pacific regions to share best practices and evaluate experiences with others for developing and strengthening their policies to counter all forms of discrimination. This includes measures for greater social inclusion of city dwellers in the full respect of their political, economic, social, and cultural human rights and fundamental freedoms. Participants were invited to have a thematic discussion on discrimination-related issues such as education, culture, housing, employment, economic, environment and others.

Opening Session

Dr. Gwang-Jo Kim pointed out that the UNESCO Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific is a network of cities and municipalities that meet, discuss, share ideas, experiences, and act together to develop and strengthen their policies to counter all forms of discrimination. This allows for a more efficient implementation of policies for greater social inclusion of city dwellers in full respect of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social and cultural fields of public life.

Plenary on Human Rights and Cities

Chairperson : Prof. Jean Ahn, Chonnam National University Law School

Keynote Speaker : Mr. Lee Seong-whan, Director of Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding

In Asia-Pacific, there are many cities having a different culture, which makes the world more dynamic. However, at the same time, some countries and persons are marginalized and minority groups may be discriminated. The key word is diversity. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions shows Asia-Pacific has a low number of countries that have ratified the convention. It is important to understand

differences between regions in that there are rapid changes between them, even within one region. The reasons why diversity should be promoted are that diversity makes our society more creative, richer, attractive, more sustainable and survivable.

However, diversity does not always lead a country to a great success as the case of Europe, failure of multiculturalism. The three countries in Europe acknowledged their failure of multiculturalism, which gives opportunities to other countries including Korea that has homogenous people to reflect their policy effort of multiculturalism, since Europe is the representative continent which has strived to promote diversity. Accordingly, diversity is not significant itself, but the way of dealing with diversity is more important. To reap positive results from the policies regarding diversity, a country needs effective leaders, education, and policies. There are two key expressions which represent the positive way of tackling with diversity, 'What you do not want for yourself, you must not ask others to do it' and 'Put yourself in other shoes.'

The brief introduction of APCEIU followed. The institution has launched many programs and provided numerous opportunities that facilitate the understanding of international society. Their actions are based on the concept, Sangsaeng meaning living together.

Summary of Presentations and Highlights :

Mr. Abdul Saththar, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human rights

Sri Lanka is a multi- religious country. The country values all religions equally and has been influenced by the concepts of loving and kindness. Nevertheless a 30-year-long civil war brought about catastrophic results as the huge number of casualties, and terrorism even killed Heads of States. To overcome this and head towards a new Sri Lanka, the country launched Sri Lanka National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human rights. In addition to the implementation of the plan, the country promises to monitor the implementation of the plan effectively.

Mr. Palitha P. Abaywardena –Sri Lanka City of Colombo in Tackling Racism and Discrimination

The Ten Point Action Plan by the City of Colombo suggests the direction for tackling racism and discrimination that the country pursues. The Ten Point Action Plan is a powerful approach that guarantees protection of minority and racism victims. It will make the city a true supporter of challenging racism and discrimination and enhancing the human rights of minority. Furthermore, based on the plan, the city promotes diversity within the city and takes action to make the city a harmonious society.

Ten-Point of Action Plan/Commitment for Asia and the Pacific:

- 1) Assessing Racism and Discrimination and Monitoring Municipal Policies;
- 2) Providing Political Leadership at the City and Community Levels;
- 3) Promoting an Inclusive Society;
- 4) Strengthening Support for the Victims of Racism and Discrimination;
- 5) Facilitating Greater Participation and the Empowerment of City Dwellers through Access to Information;
- 6) Promoting the City as an Equal Opportunities Employer and Service Provider;
- 7) Promoting the City as an Active Supporter of Equal Opportunity Practices;
- 8) Challenging Racism and Discrimination through Education;

- 9) Promoting Cultural Diversity;
- 10) Preventing and Overcoming Racist Incitement and Related Violence.

Mr. Kila Dick , Papua New Guinea – Good Practices and Policies in Cities

One of major issues affecting Papua New Guinea is violence against women. The PNG Government is yet to fully implement policies tackling the problem of human rights and violence against women although laws have been passed through the parliament, which means many sorts of discrimination remain as a crucial concern of the country. Due to lack of ability to widely apply governmental policies, as one of the ways dealing with it and assisting policy framing, there the city has intervention programs.

Synthesis of Plenary 1:

The common issue that countries are facing is to tackle diversity. It is crucial to understand differences between regions and even within one region. There are so many countries having a unique culture, which makes the world more fertilized, but simultaneously, it makes some countries marginalized and minority discriminated. Accordingly, when encountering these problems, it is important to deal with promoting diversity in a positive way. As seen in presentations, there are the action plans and policies efforts which are appropriate to the characteristics of each country and city to solve these concerns. Through the presentations, we could see Sri Lanka, the multi-religious country struggle to fight against discrimination and racism with the National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, striving to overcome the detrimental results of 30-years-long war. Moreover, we confirmed the commitment of the City of Colombo to eradicate any kind of racism and discrimination with the Ten Point Action plan. Furthermore, we shared good practices and policies in cities of Papua New Guinea and how successfully the programs that it has provided has been implemented despite the lack of governmental policies tackling discrimination.

Plenary on Social Inclusion

Chairman : Dr. Utak Chung, Korean National Commission for UNESCO

It is important to share the ideas and situation of each city regarding social inclusion.

Keynote Speaker : Councilor Arthur Anae, Auckland Council, New Zealand

Auckland is the biggest city in New Zealand and plays a role as an international city. Before reforming Auckland's local government, eight districts existed. Auckland is now one council representing the ideas of people living in and has additional advisory groups including Maori, Pacific and Asian. It has been striving to include ethnic communities in decision-making.

Auckland has diverse ethnic groups. Numerous immigrants reside in Auckland and the number of ethnic groups continues to grow, which made Auckland reflect ethnic diversity in council and decision-making. Moreover, there is few Europeans and there are way more diverse ethnic groups reside in some suburban areas. Therefore, the goal of Auckland's plan is to eradicate the exclusion of various ethnic groups.

In light of New Zealand context, historically, there have not been appropriate national structures representing diverse ethnic groups' opinions. New Zealand is confronting not obvious discrimination but ignorance, fear, and insensitivity. Recognizing discrimination is necessary step to deal with the problems related to discrimination.

Summary of Presentations and Highlights :

Unity in Self Reliance Towards Progress by Mayor Roque S. Verzosa, Philippines

Tagudin is a serene city, on the other hand, it has the struggling history at one time. The Tagudin Journey shows the appreciation for the trust toward the new leadership given by people living in the city. It provides equal opportunity and social services with citizens as programs for children education and computer literacy. Recently, it has had the great honor to receive many awards for the efforts it has made. The city of Tagudin is now progressing step by step thanks to Tagudin Journey. The journey of public service does not end rather it will not stop helping citizens to live better and continue to make an effort to include diverse people in the city.

Leadership Actions on Social Inclusion through Governance : the Experience of the Municipality of San Luis, Aurora by Mayor Annabelle C. Tangson

Consideration on social inclusion has always been the most important issue that the country has to deal with. San Luis, Aurora is struggling to reduce discrimination of people having different cultural backgrounds and fighting with poverty and social exclusion. The city has implemented municipal plan to accomplish the ambition for bright future of the city. Accordingly, what programs are implementing and what they championed should be considered to show the efforts of the city. Among many ways to promote social inclusion, education is the primary one that should be tackled. For those who cannot afford to school tuition fees, the municipality of San Luis, Aurora has been the powerful supporter. The city offers free boarding and scholarship to children, and the only one qualification that children should bear is the fact that they are poor. It is more serious problem as for rural area in that there is no option and no school there. As a result, the city keeps giving help to children in rural to make sure their equal chances for education. Furthermore, the municipality established reproductive health ordinance to prevent reproductive health problems and raise the awareness of women living countryside. It enhances the health of women and fight against abortion. The city also makes an effort to prevent indigenous people from marginalizing. It tries to solve the difficulty of delivering the basic service for indigenous people who reside secluded places and to give them equal opportunities having a job with education. The city promises to take actions for marginalized people and make an effort to promote social inclusion with the effective leadership.

Empowered Community, Partner in Development : The Pasil Experience using 'MAN-AAMUNGAN' by Mayor James S. Edduba

The Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997 is the act to promote and protect the rights of indigenous people. FPIC stands for free prior and informed consent of indigenous people and the core of FPIC is self-determination of indigenous people. In Kalinga, there exist some projects have been implemented using FPIC. The most important thing related to social inclusion is community empowerment and voluntary action and participation of the community. Accordingly, it is significant to keep partnership with the community and cooperate with it.

Yazd (Iran) and a History against Discrimination by S.A Mirvakili, Mayor of Yazd

Yazd has welcomed immigrants. It is rarely found that a particular district consists of a particular ethnic groups. The growing number of residents and immigrants clearly shows their friendly attitude to immigrants. Respecting human rights and eradicating any kind of

discrimination and structural inequality is on the same line with the religion that people of Yazd believe. In a word, having tolerant attitude toward different ethnicities is essential to help the city make a step forward to social inclusion.

Discussion :

Participants shared their views concerning social inclusion and agreed that there still remain some issues that should be addressed relating to social inclusion. There is a suggestion that pushing majority's thought and religion should be avoided. Also we shared the experiences of positive changes of social inclusion and human rights in each city and discussed the direction each country should head for to achieve social inclusion successfully. Still Maldives have some issues that should be solved. The only discrimination it confronts is political discrimination. Accordingly, we confirmed Maldives needs help and assistance from many countries to solve this discrimination. Besides, we took a look at the situations of different cities regarding social inclusions.

Synthesis of Plenary 2:

We are able to see great changes of Auckland, New Zealand achieved by continuous efforts tackling social inclusion. The city has made an effort to represent the voices of diverse ethnic groups and gave us meaningful insight that we should break ourselves of ignorance, fear, and insensitivity regarding discrimination. What is more, we saw how effectively Tagudin Journey enhances the quality of life of people in the city and have an impact on the progress of the city. As well as Tagudin, San Luis, Aurora has strived to prevent discrimination and solve the problems derived from poverty, implementing the municipal plan. It has supported poor children, women in countryside, and indigenous people. Furthermore, as we can see in the case of Kalinga, to promote social inclusion, partnership with the community is essential let alone the active and voluntary actions of the community. Lastly, Yazd, the city welcoming every immigrant, reminded us of the significance of friendly attitude toward people from different cultural backgrounds.

Plenary on Cities and Global Environment Change

Chairman : Dr. Gwangjo Kim, Regional Director, UNESCO

Keynote Speaker : Mr. Shin Gwang-jo, Director of Environment & Ecology Bureau

Gwangju is the city for peace and justice. There have been efforts to make the city, Gwangju, environmentally-friendly city with four environmental actions. Gwangju made programs as nurturing forest and reviving Mt. Mudeong and has helped the citizen take action to conserve the environment of the city.

Summary of Presentations and Highlights :

Global Changes and the Challenges of Racism and Discrimination by Councilor Litea ah Hoi JP, New Zealand

Every country is different. Therefore, it is necessary for everyone to listen to others' voices to understand their lives. Protecting environment is important in that people now live in the environment, and descendants will live in the same environment in the future. The council listens to the opinions of the local people to tackle environmental problems. Great effort made by the community is the key reason to the success of protecting environment. The understanding difference between people is also one of the main reasons of the success.

Policies and Practices for Social Inclusion through Municipal Climate Change Initiative by Mayor Agnes Dycoco, Philippines

Libon is a small city in the Philippines having natural gifts. The city has the Libon framework which was designed to prevent natural disaster in the area and reduce the risk of catastrophe. With this framework, the city can identify the vulnerable part to disaster in advanced and prepare for the possible natural disaster. In addition to prevention, various programs to respond disaster are established. Thanks to the effective system, Libon did not have any casualty in happening disaster and its recovery from the disaster was done fast as well. This effort is important in that social inclusion should be guaranteed even after natural disaster.

Discussion :

There is a question about dealing with environmental problems in cities and how to solve those. In addition to these, how to make the budget for the programs tackling environmental was discussed, but at the same time, there is an opinion that the more important thing than budget is technical experts that can deal with the projects regarding protecting environment.

Synthesis of Plenary 3:

The important thing in cities is to preserve its environment. Gwangju, the city of peace and justice, is not an exception. As well as Gwangju, New Zealand has not neglected the significance of participation of the community in terms of conserving environment. Besides, we had a chance to look at Libon framework which turns out to be effective to prevent and respond to nature disaster.

Conclusions

Participants had opportunities to share and discuss their policies and practices against discrimination and implementation of the UNESCO Ten Point Action Plan on the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific. Participants agreed that in Asia and the Pacific we need more collaboration and promotion to fight against discrimination. At present almost every country still has some discrimination in many difference forms, so that, it is an important duty and responsibility for mayors to implement good policies and practices against discrimination in their countries.

Participants requested RUSHSAP to assist in organizing more conference for dialogue against discrimination and promote more good policies and practices against discrimination.