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Co-Chairs  
Open Government Partnership Steering Committee

Dear Co-Chairs of the Open Government Partnership Steering Committee,

On behalf of Gwangju Metropolitan City, I would like to express my deep gratitude for giving us the opportunity to participate in the Open Government Partnership(OGP) Local Program, which guides the ongoing development of the Open Governments, with the aim of an open, transparent and accountable government.

Gwangju City's administration values innovation, integrity, and proactive communication with citizens. The City has expanded the disclosure of public interest through interactive, multiple on and offline civic participation channels: the 'Gwangju Metropolitan City Information Disclosure Portal' <https://www.gwangju.go.kr/open/>, the 'Immediate Communication Gwangju' <https://barosotong.gwangju.go.kr/>, and an enactment of a local ordinance for civic engagement. In addition, four functional divisions composed of 30 officials are dedicated to work on the public interest disclosure and proactive communication with citizens and 709 civic groups. These commitments of our city are in line with the values of OGP: transparency, anti-corruption and civic participation.

In the process of implementing policies, Gwangju City is resolving confrontations and conflicts that are divided into pros and cons through on and offline citizen deliberation systems such as 'Immediate Communication Gwangju' and 'Civil Rights Committee'.

The first example is the public discussion on the construction of subway line 2,

which required heavy financial resources. The local community had been divided for 16 years since 2003 due to the confrontations between the civil society organizations, and the civil society organizations and the city government. In response, Gwangju City Government accepted the proposals of the civil society organizations and formed a 'Public Discussion Committee on Gwangju Subway Line 2', in which citizen representatives participated in the agenda, methods, and procedures of the construction, and reached a social consensus through the Citizen Participation in the Deliberative Procedure.

The second example is the designation of Hwangryonggang River Wetland Protection Area. The area is located in the center of the city, causing conflicts among residents for more than a year over development and conservation. In response, a working committee consisting 16 representatives of the residents, city and district councils, civil society organizations, experts, and central and local government officials was formed to conduct on-site surveys, hold resident meetings, and public debates to resolve the issue.

These examples demonstrate that proactive citizen communication and engagement are important to ensure the sustainability of the policies, based on the citizens' trust and confidence to the transparency of the procedures above all else.

Our city has a proud memory of the 'May 18 Democratic Movement', which resisted the dictatorship regime through the power of citizens in 1980. This democratic movement is evaluated both domestically and internationally as the most exemplary civic autonomy that maintained order by citizens themselves.

In line with its international status as a global city of democracy, human rights and peace, Gwangju Metropolitan City serves as a co-host of the United Cities and Local Government-Committee on Social Inclusion, Participative Democracy and Human Rights(UCLG-CSIPDHR) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Asia-Pacific Coalition of Cities Against Discrimination(UNESCO APCAD), and has engaged in various activities such as co-hosting the World Human Rights Cities Forum with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights(UN OHCHR) and UNESCO.

The significance of inter-city cooperation is increasing in the New Normal

Era. In particular, collaboration between international cities based on proactive communication with citizens is very important in order to effectively respond to the recent climate crisis, COVID-19 outbreak and de-globalization.

To this end, the International Climate & Environment Center(NPO) provides objective information such as changes in the environmental trends and impact on citizens' lives, while the Gwangju YMCA(NGO) prepares and proposes policies that reach civic consensus by sharing information with citizens. Therefore, the city will reflect the proposals of civic groups in city policies, the results of which will feed back to the citizens.

Gwangju's commitment to join the OGP Local Program is based on the municipal values of innovation, integrity and communication to share the know-how's and system in policy execution as well as learn the best practices of other cities. We also aim to build a more accessible and responsible government to citizens and improve cooperative relations such as joint city declaration on international issues that requires global cooperation for an immediate response to the climate crisis.

Gwangju adheres to the open government principles set forth in the "Open Government Declaration" and aims for a transparent and citizen-centered government based on continuous cooperation with civil society organizations, and is ready for exchange, cooperation and adding value to the international community.

Therefore, it is with great enthusiasm that we ask your positive review of Gwangju's participation in the OGP Local Program.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Lee, Yong-sup

Mayor of Gwangju Metropolitan City

Republic of Korea