

New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in The City



Index

About us	4
Presentation	5
Introduction	5
Human Rights in the City: the Human Rights Cities Movement	5
Drafting Process and Structure	8
Preamble	12
General Provisions	13
Objective	10
Scope	10
Values and Principles	15
Local and regional governments delivering essential services	20
1. Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation	22
2. Right to Food	23
3. Right to Energy	24
4. Right to Internet	25
5. Right to Waste Management	26
6. Right to Public Transport and Integrated, Sustainable Mobility	27
Local and regional governments ensuring social rights	28
7. Right to Adequate Housing	30
8. Right to Education	31
9. Right to Public Health Services and Well-being	32
10. Right to Care and Social Services	33
11. Right to Social Security	34
Local and regional governments advancing cultural rights	36
12. Right to Heritage	38
13. Right to Creativity and Creative Industries	39
14. Right to Cultural Diversity	40
15. Right to a Culture of Human Rights	41
16. Right to Sustainable Tourism	42
Local and regional governments promoting economic rights	44
17. Right to Work	46
18. Right to a Human Rights Economy and Financial Inclusion	47
19. Right to Transparency and Integrity	48

Local and regional governments materializing substantive democracy, civil and political rights	50
20. Right to Freedom of Media, Opinion, Religion and Belief	52
21. Right to Inclusive Citizenship and Welcoming Territories	53
22. Right to Participatory Democracy and Co-creation of the City	54
23. Right to Human Security and Peace	55
24. Right to Information and Digital Rights	56
25. Right to Justice	57
Local and regional governments safeguarding a sustainable environment and inclusive territorial planning	58
26. Right to Accessibility and Proximity	60
27. Right to Inclusive Public Spaces and Transformative Urban Planning	61
28. Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment	62
29. Right to Climate Action and Justice	63
Local and regional governments fostering equality and non-discrimination	64
30. Rights of Women	66
31. Rights of Children and Youth	67
32. Rights of Older Persons	68
33. Rights of Migrants, Asylum-Seekers, Internally Displaced People and Refugees	69
34. Rights of Ethnic Diversities and Freedom from Racism	70
35. Rights of Indigenous Peoples	71
36. Rights of Gender and Sexual Diversity	72
37. Rights of All Persons with Disabilities	73
Local and regional governments as duty and rights-bearing actors	74
Right to Financing and Autonomy	75
Right to Territorial Diplomacy	76
Right to International Solidarity	77
Right to International Climate Justice	78
Final Provisions	80
Adoption and Application of the Charter-Agenda in Each City	81

About us

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global platform that represents and defends the interests of local and regional governments before the international community, working to give cities more political influence in global governance.

The mission of the **Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (CISDPDH)** is to contribute to building a common voice for the cities of UCLG in the areas of social inclusion, participatory democracy, and human rights. It also aims to guide local and regional governments in designing these policies and, to that end, fosters political debates, the exchange of experiences, and peer learning among cities around the world.

For more information:

www.uclg.org

www.uclg-cisd.org

Presentation

Introduction

Today, more than half of humanity lives in cities. Contemporary urbanization represents a profound reconfiguration of the political, legal, and spatial order in which human rights are produced, experienced, and claimed.

International human rights law has historically recognized the State as the primary bearer of obligations. However, this normative architecture remains incomplete if it does not acknowledge that the real effectiveness of rights is largely determined at the local level. Local and regional governments are not merely administrative components of the nation-state; they are political actors with normative, budgetary, and regulatory capacity, responsible for organizing the material conditions of everyday life — where rights take shape in practice: where access to or denial of water, housing, energy, mobility, care, information, participation, or time occurs.

Yet, despite their central role, local and regional governments often operate with limited resources, constrained mandates, and insufficient recognition within international human rights frameworks. The gap between global commitments and local implementation remains significant.

The New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City responds to this gap. It is both a political commitment and a practical instrument. It affirms the responsibility — and the capacity — of local and regional governments to proactively and systematically promote individual and collective human rights, and to continue building a new generation of rights.

Human rights are not abstract declarations; they become meaningful when translated into local governance, budgets, policies, and public services. **The Charter assumes that human rights are universal in their foundation, but necessarily local in their realization.**

Developed collaboratively with local and regional governments, civil society organizations, academia, and other institutional partners, the Charter recognizes the diversity of local contexts while offering a shared direction. It clarifies not only what cities should strive for, but also how they can progressively strengthen their practice to build more just, democratic, and caring communities.

As a dynamic framework to this Charter, the Right to the City — the right of all inhabitants, present and future, to inhabit, shape, and benefit from just, inclusive, and sustainable cities — offers a new way of understanding how rights can be organized and promoted, both those established by international human rights treaties and emerging rights, from an integrated, territorial, and proximity-based perspective. These aspects, not always covered in traditional human rights frameworks, are essential to confronting and transforming the dynamics of contemporary urban and regional development, and can be understood both as goals and as strategies to achieve more just and equitable cities.

This vision aligns with the New Urban Agenda (NUA), adopted at Habitat III in 2016, which promotes cities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, and recognizes the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, the self-organized political space of the constituency organized by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, as the NUA official follow-up mechanism. The Quito Outcome Document also recognizes the Right to the City as a cornerstone of transformative urban development.

The Right to the City was further placed at the heart of UCLG's political mandate during its World Congress in 2022, when the adoption of the UCLG Pact for the Future reaffirmed the network's commitment to equality, including through the renewal of care, resilience, and local democracy. This commitment was reflected in the definition of 2022-2026 UCLG's Policy Councils, with a dedicated council on the Right to the City: Reclaiming the Commons. Towards the 2026 UCLG World Congress in Tangier, human rights, including the Right to the City, are an overarching political principle of the Local Social Covenant, UCLG's political mandate and the framework of the Municipal Movement for shaping the new generation of universal local public services, which will serve to define the territorial contribution to the post-2030 negotiation, grounded on local democracy, public service provision, and human rights.

Democracy and human rights are mutually reinforcing. In an era of global challenges, the Charter-Agenda calls on cities to assume their historic role: not only as administrators of the present, but as political actors of the future, capable of shaping the meaning of development, rebuilding the social contract, and affirming that human rights, in the 21st century, will be urban – or they will not be at all.

Human Rights in the City: the Human Rights Cities Movement

The Human Rights Cities movement emerged in the late 1990s as local governments increasingly recognized their responsibilities under international human rights law, and the role of the city as a key space for the effective promotion of human rights. From the **People's Movement for Human Rights Education** (1988) to the **World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna** (1993), several international initiatives would pave the way for a more consolidated discussion on how human rights could be better protected when framed and implemented locally. This impulse helped set the stage for the Human Rights Cities movement that began to take shape shortly afterwards, in particular with the Rosario declaration (1997).

Since its inception, the Human Rights Cities movement has been tackling specific human rights challenges linked to urbanization, from essential services provision to access and guarantee to work or civil rights, but it has also emphasized the need to address the new challenges produced by urbanization and globalization from a local perspective. **Local governments and the so-called Human Rights Cities have focused not only on localizing international human rights standards, but have also therefore expanded the human rights agenda.**

A Human Rights City is one that promotes human rights and turns them into a cross-cutting driver of local agendas on the basis of its own history, challenges and priorities. As defined in the Gwangju Guiding Principles (2014), a Human Rights City applies a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to urban governance through inclusive and participatory processes, integrating human rights into municipal decision-making and implementation.

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a conceptual and action framework based on human rights standards which governments should adopt to promote and protect human rights. People are recognized as rights-holders with entitlements, and governments and other actors are duty-bearers responsible for ensuring those rights. It involves as key attributes of good governance the principles of transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation, responsiveness, as well as non-discrimination and inclusion.

Over the past two decades, the movement has been shaped by key charters and milestones, including the **European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City** (2000), the **Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City** (2011), adopted by UCLG, and the **Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City** (2014). These frameworks have supported cities across all regions in developing locally grounded human rights policies.

The consolidation of the Human Rights Cities movement led to another historical landmark: **the formal recognition of the role of local and regional governments in the promotion and protection of human rights by the United Nations**. Today, the Human Rights Cities movement brings together local and regional governments, civil society, academia, and international institutions to advance human rights from the local to the global level, with renovated aspirations.

Drafting Process and Structure

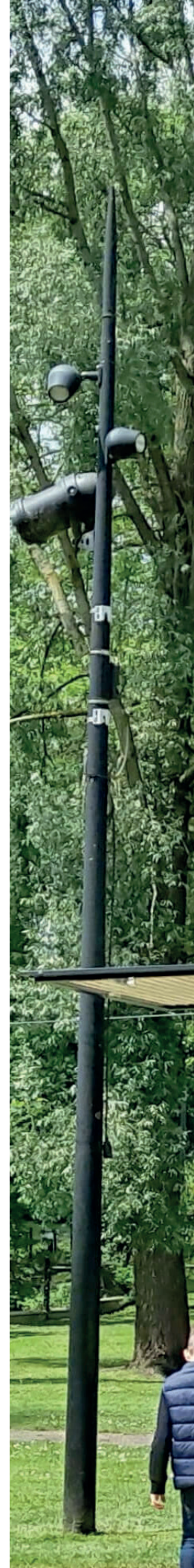
In 2011, UCLG adopted the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City: the first attempt by local and regional governments to adopt a global framework for implementing human rights at the local level. The Charter-Agenda recognized 12 human rights and combined a localized understanding of international human rights principles with specific proposals for their implementation, according to each city's local reality.

Ten years after the adoption of this key document, UCLG and its Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (CISDPDH) launched in 2022 a participatory process to update the narrative, vision, and contents of the Global Charter-Agenda for a stronger commitment. The process was guided by the CISDPDH Technical Secretariat and an international steering board composed of representatives of the CISDPDH co-presidency (Gwangju, Grigny, Mexico City, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Utrecht), local and regional governments (Barcelona, Terrassa, Vienna, Quilmes, San Antonio [Chile], and Valparaíso), partner organizations (the Global Platform for the Right to the City, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), and experts from Chile, Poland, and the United States.

The new structure of the Charter was developed collaboratively, and included a consultation process with UCLG's Policy Councils within the process *The Letters* from the Local Social Covenant, the written exchange between the UCLG political leadership and organized civil society gathered around the UCLG Town Hall; the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and other relevant stakeholders. **As a result, the Charter reflects the progress achieved by local and regional governments, the expansion of the human rights agenda, and the maturation of the Right to the City movement, and seeks to inspire the next decade of the Human Rights Cities movement and the recognition of a new generation of rights.** It integrates evolving concepts such as the **Right to the City** as a structural framework, the concept of **Caring Territories** as a political and social commitment, the **City of the Commons** as a call for new modes of democratic resource management, **Feminist Municipalism** as an approach that re-centers care, gender equality, and the redistribution of power and resources, and **Intergenerational Equity** as a principle that ensures sustainability and justice across generations. In line with the New Urban Agenda, this Charter strengthens the role of local and regional governments as agents of democratic renewal and as frontline actors in tackling global challenges through the human rights-based approach.

The New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City is organized into **seven clusters** and recognizes **thirty-seven human rights**. It follows a progressive structure, moving from the provision of essential services to broader thematic groupings and overarching principles of inclusion and non-discrimination. This layered approach allows the Charter to be read in two directions: from the ground up, beginning with the local delivery of essential public services, or from overarching commitments for inclusion down to service implementation. In doing so, it reinforces the interdependence of all rights and their concrete applicability at the local level.

The Charter also reflects the integrated nature of the Right to the City, linking equality, sociospatial justice, democratic governance, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability as interconnected pillars. Within this framework, democratic and participatory governance serves as a critical foundation for safeguarding all other rights, particularly in the context of ongoing democratic backsliding. Finally, the Charter includes an eighth cluster on the **Rights of Cities**, recognizing that cities must also be endowed with the rights and enabling conditions that allow them to effectively fulfill their human rights obligations.





Rights of:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Rights of Older Persons
- Migrants, Asylum-Seekers, Internally Displaced People and Refugees
- Ethnic Diversities and Freedom from Racism
- Indigenous Peoples
- Gender and Sexual Diversities
- All Persons with Disabilities

Equality and Non-discrimination

Right to:

- Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation
- Food
- Energy
- Internet
- Waste Management
- Public Transport and Integrated, Sustainable Mobility

Essential Services

Right to:

- Adequate Housing
- Education
- Public Health Services and Well-being
- Care and Social Services
- Social Security

Social Rights

Right to:

- Heritage
- Creativity and Creative Industries
- Cultural Diversity
- A Culture of Human Rights
- Sustainable Tourism

Cultural Rights

Economic Rights

Right to:

- Work
- A Human Rights Economy and Financial Inclusion
- Transparency and Integrity

Substantive Democracy, Civil and Political Rights

Right to:

- Freedom of Media, Opinion, Religion and Belief
- Inclusive Citizenship and Welcoming Territories
- Participatory Democracy and Co-creation of the City
- Human Security and Peace
- Information and Digital Rights
- Justice

Sustainable Environment and Inclusive Territorial Planning

Right to:

- Accessibility and Proximity
- Inclusive Public Spaces and Transformative Urban Planning
- A Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment
- Climate Action and Justice

in The City

Preamble

Whereas all human beings are entitled to the rights and freedoms recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), subsequent international instruments – including the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights (1966), regional conventions, charters, and other fundamental human rights treaties,

Whereas democracy is a universal cornerstone for human rights, and democratic local governance, strengthened institutions, and participation mutually reinforce human rights and help resist democratic backsliding,

Considering that human diversity – including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, disability, migration status, religious beliefs, and other socioeconomic and cultural characteristics – is a fundamental value, and is essential for equality, non-discrimination, and meaningful participation in urban life,

Recognizing that the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda affirm the universal goals of equitable, inclusive, and sustainable urban development, and that cities are central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and rethinking the post-2030 development Agenda,

Taking into particular consideration that extreme poverty, rising inequality, environmental crises, and climate change constitute, in themselves, a violation of human rights, and underline the urgent need to guarantee human rights in times of crisis,

Stressing that the climate crisis is already exacerbating existing inequalities and undermining the realization of rights, particularly among urban populations experiencing vulnerability, and reaffirming that cities must prioritize just, inclusive, and rights-based climate action,

Considering that local and regional governments must have the legal and financial instruments necessary to guarantee the effective exercise of the civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights of all their inhabitants, coordinating with national governments to clarify their mandates, secure resources, and ensure coherence in the realization of rights at different levels,

Recognizing that cities are a collective space and a common good, and that the Right to the City includes not only the equitable use of urban resources, but also the democratization of decision-making processes that shape the city, as well as territoriality as a fundamental basis for the exercise of inclusive citizenships,

Considering that a just city must also be a Caring Territory, where the rights of those who require care are fully protected and supported, as well as the rights of unpaid caregivers and care and support workers,

Recognizing that the commons – including water, ecosystems, biodiversity, health, education, housing, culture, knowledge, public space, and mobility – are shared resources, practices and services essential to collective life, and that their social and environmental functions must be prioritized over commercial exploitation,

Recognizing that the Guidance Framework for Creating a Human Rights City (UCLG & OHCHR, 2025) constitutes a central element of a human rights–based approach to local governance,

Recognizing UCLG’s pioneering role and leadership in rights-based advocacy, including landmark frameworks such as the Lampedusa Charter (2022) and Culture 21 Plus (2026),

Recognizing that movements like Human Rights Cities and local multilateralism, particularly through networks such as UCLG, enable cities to localize human rights through knowledge exchange, peer learning, and advocacy, while advancing the recognition of a new generation of human rights.

General Provisions

Objective

The New Global Charter-Agenda aims to strengthen the realization of inhabitants’ rights at the local level. This document serves as both a commitment and a guide for the short-, medium-, and long-term planning and implementation of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) in local action.

Scope

- **All provisions of the Charter-Agenda apply to all city inhabitants, individually and collectively, without discrimination.** A **“city inhabitant”** is any person that lives within its territory, even if without a fixed domicile.
- A **“city”** is any territorially defined entity, irrespective of size, institutionally constituted as a municipal or metropolitan local government, including its urban and adjacent rural areas, and the full range of institutions and social actors engaged in its management.
- **“Territory”** refers to any area managed, directly or indirectly, under the city’s jurisdiction.

Cities that adhere to the New Global Charter-Agenda commit to designing and implementing actions within this framework for the effective realization of human rights. These actions are guided by principles that ensure the progressive, integrated, and accountable realization of human rights at the territorial level, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Public obligation and responsibility:** Local and regional governments are duty-bearers, and must make the best possible use of available resources, establish a clear path of continuous improvement, and ensure that there is no regression in the realization of rights. There are essential, non-negotiable baseline duties that must also be fulfilled immediately by local and regional governments.
- **Integrated and interdependent approach:** Local and regional government action must take into account the natural interconnections between rights by designing cross-cutting, comprehensive policies without fragmentation.
- **Operationalization:** Human rights standards must be integrated into planning, budgeting, service delivery, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability processes to ensure their effective realization in specific territorial contexts.
- **Legal and political mandate:** The responsibilities of local authorities and administrations derive from the competences legally assigned to them. The Charter-Agenda complements and reinforces national human rights protections, ensuring local duties align with constitutional, legal, and international obligations.

- **Public oversight of services:** Local and regional governments must ensure that all services — whether directly managed or delivered through private actors — comply with human rights standards. This requires effective regional and municipal oversight, regulation, and accountability mechanisms to ensure that privatization or outsourcing does not undermine rights.
- **International cooperation and translocal learning:** Through the Human Rights Cities Movement and institutions like UCLG, local and regional governments are encouraged to actively promote international cooperation, peer exchange, and translocal learning as means to strengthen institutional capacities, share good practices, and develop context-sensitive solutions.
- **The rights enshrined in this Charter are indivisible and of equal importance.** Likewise, the recommendations in this Charter are neither complete nor exhaustive; they do not exclude other alternatives for implementing a human rights-based approach, nor do they imply any order of priority among them.



Values and Principles

As cross-cutting axes, the Charter-Agenda is guided by the following values:

Right to the City	Ensuring that all people can inhabit, use, produce, and transform the city in a fair, inclusive, and sustainable way, guaranteeing equitable access to services, public spaces, housing, and opportunities, as well as active participation in urban decision-making.
Caring Territories	Placing the sustainability of life at the center, prioritizing the well-being of people, communities, and the planet, leaving no one and no place behind. This includes recognizing, redistributing, reducing, and valuing care work in order to foster more just, equal, and democratic societies.
City of the Commons	Promoting the collective and democratic management of resources, spaces, and services, fostering participatory governance in which citizens co-create and care for the commons.
Feminist Municipalism	Ensuring the integration of the gender perspective in local public action to build more just, inclusive, and caring cities, adopting feminist approaches that address structural gender inequalities, challenge patriarchal norms, and redistribute power and resources, including within local administrations.
Intergenerational Equity	Ensuring that action and governance meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by integrating environmental sustainability and protection, social cohesion, and long-term institutional resilience.

Drawing on the principles of international human rights treaties and expanding upon them, this Charter-Agenda is guided by the following principles:

- Human Dignity:**

All actions must respect the inherent dignity of every person as a rights-holder and community member.
- Universality and Interdependence:**

All human rights are universal, apply to every person without exception, and are interrelated — the realization of one right often depends on the fulfillment of others, and the violation of one also affects the others.
- Equality and Non-Discrimination:**

Cities must ensure equal access and actively dismantle discrimination based on gender, race, income, migration status, age, place of residence, disability, sexual orientation, beliefs, religion, or other characteristics.
- Accessibility, Acceptability, Availability, Quality and Affordability:**

Services, spaces, and processes must be accessible, acceptable, and available to all, with particular attention to historically marginalized and underserved groups, and have a sufficient standard to meet the real needs of people. References to “**access**” include both physical/material availability and economic accessibility, encompassing usability, proximity, adaptability, quality, and affordability.
- Transparency, Participation, and Accountability:**

Public institutions must operate in an open and accessible manner, guaranteeing the right of access to public information, promoting meaningful participation so that people can influence decision-making — particularly those most affected by public policies — and enabling effective mechanisms for oversight and accountability, in line with the principles of open government.
- Empowerment:**

Local and regional governments should build people’s curiosity and capacity to know, claim, and shape their rights. This includes raising individual and collective awareness of rights and responsibilities.
- Progressiveness:**

Rights implementation must progress and improve over time, avoiding any rollback in protections or access.

Climatic and Social Functions of the City:

Cities must actively support and preserve their environmental and social functions, including the commons, climate mitigation and adaptation, public green spaces, urban biodiversity, social interaction, and community well-being, ensuring that urban development contributes to both ecological balance and social cohesion.

Solidarity and Multilevel Action:

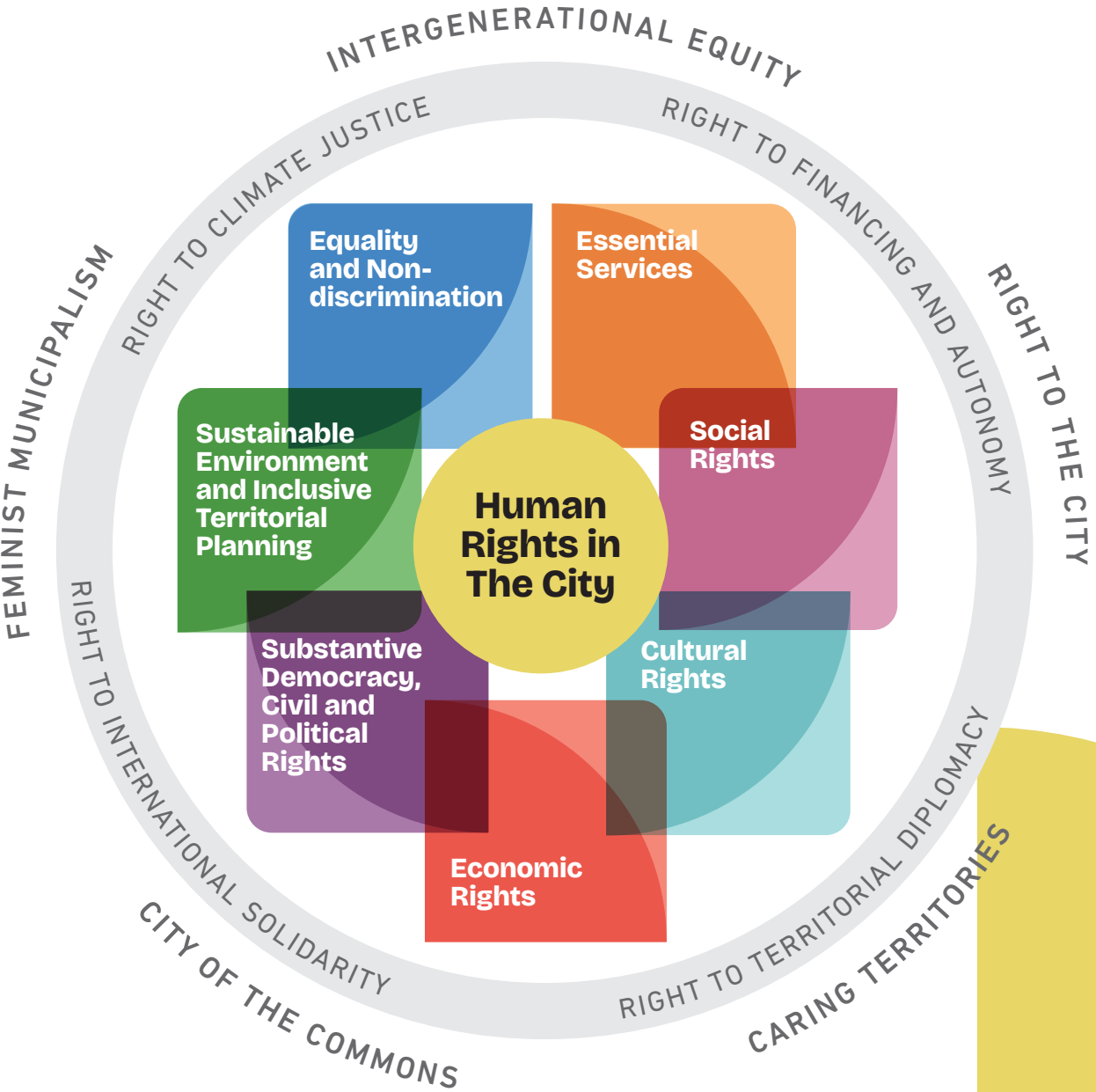
Local and regional governments must foster interdependent collective responsibility among people, communities, and territories in order to guarantee dignified living conditions, reduce inequalities, and promote multilevel cooperation in the realization of human rights.

Public Interest and Oversight in Service Provision:

Regardless of whether services are delivered by public, private, or third-sector actors, local and regional governments have a duty to safeguard the public interest by setting clear human rights obligations, ensuring transparency, and providing avenues for redress.



**New Global Charter-Agenda
for Human Rights in The City**



Local and regional governments delivering essential services

1. Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation
2. Right to Food
3. Right to Energy
4. Right to Internet
5. Right to Waste Management
6. Right to Public Transport and Integrated, Sustainable Mobility



All city inhabitants have the right to live in an inclusive city, which includes having access to essential social services close to where they live, provided under fair and affordable conditions.

Delivering essential public services is one of the most direct and effective ways local and regional governments can realize human rights. Services such as water, sanitation, energy, mobility, food access, and internet are not just policy domains — they are essential enablers of dignity, equality, and full participation in society, and are a crucial step in achieving caring societies. Without equitable access to these services, people's rights to health, housing, education, work, and public participation are undermined.

Local and regional governments are the frontline providers of many essential services. Recognizing them as commons and human rights obligations — not just technical functions — transforms the way cities plan, invest, and engage with communities.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Recognize essential services as a human right and reflect this in local legislation, planning, budgeting, and delivery frameworks, ensuring that local budgets for the provision of these services are designed and implemented in accordance with a human rights-based approach.
- | Establish a social participation mechanism in the design, delivery, and monitoring of services, with particular attention to historically marginalized groups, while fostering public-community partnerships for shared sovereignty and co-responsibility.
- | Ensure that information and management of essential services is transparent and accessible, including on the cost of services and source of funds, with mechanisms for active participation of city inhabitants in their oversight and decision-making processes.
- | Adopt a feminist and caring approach to public service delivery highlighting how structural gender, racial, class and territorial inequalities shape access to services.
- | Ensure access to essential services during all types of crises, including policies that prevent disconnection of water, electricity, or internet, ensure food access, and guarantee hygiene facilities during emergencies.
- | Establish effective measures to ensure that private sector providers of social or public interest services fully respect the rights guaranteed under this Charter-Agenda without discrimination, require explicit human rights commitments in all city contracts and concessions, and consider remunicipalization where necessary to safeguard these rights.
- | Ensure universal and continuous access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, food, energy, high-quality internet, waste management and transport and mobility for every inhabitant, regardless of migration status, location, or income level.
- | Immediate abolition, where they exist, of legal, administrative, and procedural requirements that tie the provision of essential services to inhabitants' administrative status, particularly their migration status.
- | Promote integrated approaches to service delivery, including the co-location of services in venues such as libraries.

1. Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

Every person is entitled to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water for personal and domestic use. Every person must have physical and economic access to sanitation facilities that are safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable. Guaranteeing this right requires not only infrastructures, but also inclusive and transparent governance that puts people and ecosystems at the center.

The human right to safe drinking and sanitation is essential for living a life of dignity, health, and well-being. It is foundational to the realization of many other rights, including life itself. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation must therefore be understood not as a commodity or a service to be optimized, but as a common good and a condition for democracy, equality, and social cohesion.

Local and regional governments are key to guaranteeing this right, as they are responsible for planning, maintaining, and regulating water and sanitation services that meet human rights standards and respond to local needs.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Invest in resilient and quality infrastructure that ensures the quality, safety, sufficient and regular availability of water and sanitation services, including in informal settlements and rural areas, while integrating nature-based solutions and circular solutions that preserve water ecosystems.
- Adopt local regulations that prohibit water cuts for people in precarious situations, recognizing access to water as an essential public service that cannot be denied on economic grounds.
- Ensure access to safe water and toilets in public spaces by providing clean and accessible public toilets, drinking fountains, and hygiene facilities, especially for persons experiencing homelessness and vulnerability.
- Ensure that the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs of women and girls – including menstrual hygiene – are fully met, with particular attention to schools.
- Implement water-saving and reuse programs, such as greywater reuse systems, rainwater harvesting, and public awareness campaigns, to reduce water consumption and strengthen resilience, while fostering a culture of care and responsibility towards water resources.
- Apply equity-based tariff models that charge higher rates for high-volume users and where the most vulnerable households pay less, ensuring affordability for all without compromising financial sustainability.
- Develop infrastructure solutions for informal settlements, including decentralized systems such as container-based sanitation or mobile water services, co-designed with inhabitants and supported by local and regional governments to ensure dignified and continuous access.
- Strengthen emergency preparedness, by ensuring uninterrupted access to water and sanitation during disasters, pandemics, or service disruptions, acknowledging the vital role that local and regional governments play in providing care when crises hit.
- Engage communities in water management and promote public-community collaboration, involving inhabitants in the co-management of water access points, monitoring service quality, and reporting issues, as part of a participatory and inclusive governance model.

2. Right to Food

Every person has the right to physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, in order to live with dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. The right to food is both a social and territorial right, inseparable from broader agendas of social justice, health, equality and environmental sustainability.

Food is not merely a commodity – it is a public good, the foundation of life, culture, and democracy. Ensuring this right requires transforming food systems to make them local/territorial, inclusive, sustainable, resilient and built upon strong urban–rural linkages.

Local and regional governments play a fundamental role in realizing this right and reshaping food systems by supporting local production and distribution and ensuring that no one is excluded from access to food and nutrition. They are best placed to act as facilitators, coordinators, and guarantors of care – connecting a wide range of stakeholders, linking producers, consumers, and ecosystems through territorial food systems that integrate cities, peri-urban, and rural areas.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Develop territorial food strategies that integrate goals around adequate nutrition, environmental sustainability and resilience, local economic development, and poverty reduction into coherent, cross-cutting policies.
- Integrate the right to food into broader health, housing, and climate strategies, recognizing the interdependence between food, water, housing, and social protection as pillars of human dignity.
- Support local food production through urban, peri-urban, and rural agriculture, short supply chains, farmers markets, public procurement practices, gardening programs, community allotments, and public land use for agriculture.
- Implement subsidies and community-based food distribution programs – including food banks, solidarity centers, and community food hubs – to provide food for free or at a low cost, to ensure emergency and structural responses for people living in poverty.
- Promote local markets, cooperatives and social enterprises to strengthen community-based economies and reduce dependence on volatile global food supply chains.
- Engage civil society in designing food policies and food literacy that reflect local needs and initiatives, cultural practices, and sustainability goals, ensuring the active participation of women, children, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Introduce quality control to guarantee food safety, promoting local mechanisms and partnerships that ensure food quality and safety. Examples include market supervision, local procurement standards, nutrition education, and cooperation with national agencies.
- Introduce healthy, affordable and locally sourced school meals in partnership with local farmers and producers through public procurement practices.
- Recognize and support the care dimension of food policies, valuing the invisible work of those – often women – who sustain communities through production, preparation, and distribution of food.

3. Right to Energy

Every person has the right to continuous and non-discriminatory access to affordable, safe, sustainable, and environmentally responsible energy, sufficient to meet their basic needs through essential uses such as lighting, cooling and heating, safe and adequate cooking, communication or mobility.

Its realization requires not only the availability of adequate, resilient, and clean energy infrastructure, but also democratic, inclusive, and transparent governance frameworks that ensure affordability, prevent energy poverty, protect people in vulnerable situations, and guide a just transition toward sustainable energy systems.

Local and regional governments play a growing role in ensuring energy justice – from regulating local supply and pricing, to protecting people experiencing vulnerability from energy poverty, to leading the transition toward clean and equitable energy systems.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Create or support local sustainable energy agencies to regulate supply, ensure fair pricing, and promote energy efficiency.
- Ensure affordability and prevent energy poverty, through subsidies, social tariffs, and measures that prohibit disconnections for non-payment.
- Implement and support the creation of renewable energy infrastructure, including solar, wind, and geothermal systems, in urban and rural areas, including in public buildings.
- Introduce a basic free energy subsidy for households at risk of energy poverty, providing a minimum amount of energy to all households to ensure that fundamental needs are met.
- Retrofit public buildings and set-up incentives and programs for private buildings for energy efficiency, especially for low-income households, to reduce costs and energy-intensity.
- Support community-owned and locally anchored energy initiatives as a rights-based alternative to profit-driven models.

4. Right to Internet

Every person has the right to continuous, universal, and non-discriminatory access to affordable, safe, and high-quality Internet, sufficient to exercise their rights and fully participate in social, economic, cultural, and democratic life.

Internet access is recognized as an essential service and a key enabler of the full exercise of human rights in the digital age. It is essential for access to information, freedom of expression, education, employment, culture, participation in public life, and access to services. Ensuring reliable and equitable access to the internet is a matter of social justice, digital inclusion, and democratic participation.

Local and regional governments play a critical role in closing the digital divide by expanding connectivity, ensuring affordability, promoting digital literacy, and safeguarding internet access as a public and common good, particularly for marginalized and underserved communities.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Recognize universal and affordable access to broadband internet at adequate speeds as an essential right to participate in contemporary economic, social, political, and cultural life.
- Provide or expand free internet access (and its quality) in public spaces such as parks, libraries, community centers, health centers/hospitals, and transport networks.
- Adopt affordability measures, such as subsidized tariffs or social rates for low-income households.
- Support locally managed community internet networks, and resist efforts to limit these.
- Offer accessible digital literacy training programs and digital inclusion initiatives to ensure every person can make full use of this resource, especially for persons with disabilities, women, older persons, children, and youth in marginalized communities. Such training should not just cover technical skills, but also information literacy and critical thinking skills.
- Advocate for national and regional policies that treat internet access as a public good and regulate private providers to ensure fairness and inclusion.

5. Right to Waste Management

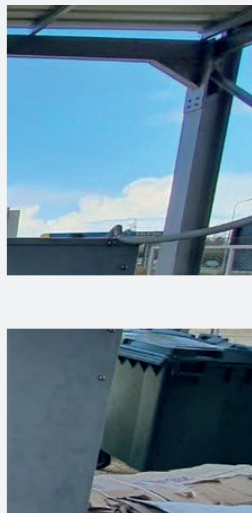
Every person has the right to live in clean environments, free from pollution, under adequate sanitary conditions, without risks to health or environmental degradation, within the framework of integrated waste management.

The right to waste management is a fundamental component of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and must be realized in a way that contributes to social well-being and the sustainability of present and future generations.

Local and regional governments are responsible for guaranteeing safe, inclusive, and environmentally responsible waste management systems that serve all inhabitants equitably, including those in informal settlements and historically excluded areas.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Establish and maintain an integrated municipal waste management system and plan that minimizes environmental impact, and ensures safe collection, treatment, and disposal in line with environmental and public health standards.
- Ensure universal and regular access to safe waste collection services in all neighborhoods, including informal or underserved areas, through municipal, public-private or public-community enterprises.
- Enact and enforce regulations to ensure proper waste disposal and prevent illegal dumping.
- Ensure safe working conditions for waste workers, including informal pickers and recyclers by recognizing their contributions and improving their working conditions.
- Establish an efficient local system for the separation of solid waste, including local recycling, sorting, and composting facilities to process waste close to its source and reduce the impacts of transport.
- Promote waste reduction, separation and recycling at the source, including public education campaigns and appropriate infrastructure (such as color-coded bins).
- Encourage and enact regulatory frameworks to reduce plastic, single-use materials, and non-biodegradable materials.
- Support the circular economy by incentivizing reuse, repair, and material recovery initiatives in partnership with communities and civil society organizations.



6. Right to Public Transport and Integrated, Sustainable Mobility

Every person has the right to move without physical, economic, social, or cultural barriers through adequate infrastructure, services, and modes of transport that are integrated and equitably distributed across the territory, in an affordable, safe, sustainable, and efficient manner.

The right to mobility is a public good and a structural component of spatial and social justice, essential for ensuring equality and preventing segregation; it is fundamental to the exercise of many other rights, such as access to education, employment, healthcare, and participation in civic life.

Local and regional governments have the duty to plan and manage sustainable, integrated, and high-quality transport systems, prioritizing collective and non-motorized modes, reducing territorial inequalities, and ensuring that transport systems are safe, affordable, inclusive, accessible, environmentally sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all inhabitants.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Adopt feminist, inclusive, and intermodal urban mobility plans that prioritize sustainable alternatives to car-based models, integrate the gender lens into mobility, ensure safety and human security in transport, and address financial barriers for low-income inhabitants.
- Provide an accessible, efficient, safe, and sustainable public transportation system for all inhabitants and interconnectivity between different modes of transportation to reduce reliance on private vehicles.
- Invest in low-emission and accessible transport systems, including electric buses, bike-sharing networks, and intermodal hubs and implement car-free zones.
- Promote active mobility (walking, cycling) by developing safe, connected, and well-maintained pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
- Establish subsidized fares or free public transport, especially for disabled passengers, low-income groups, students, and essential workers.
- Coordinate planning across city departments to ensure that mobility plans are integrated in urban planning and climate action plans.
- Promote digital platforms that allow users to plan, book and pay for multimodal journeys in one place for enhancing convenience and flexibility.
- Involve inhabitants in transport planning through participatory processes that reflect the diversity of mobility needs and realities, including those relevant to providing and requiring care, and ensure there is an accessible complaint mechanism to report any failure to meet established transport standards.
- Monitor and evaluate mobility policies using disaggregated data to address inequalities through an intersectional approach and adapt to emerging challenges.

Local and regional governments ensuring social rights

7. Right to Adequate Housing
8. Right to Education
9. Right to Public Health Services and Well-being
10. Right to Care and Social Services
11. Right to Social Security



Social rights are essential to the fulfillment of human dignity and the creation of inclusive, equitable societies. These rights — including housing, education, healthcare, care systems and social security — are foundational for individual and collective well-being. Yet social rights are often the first to be weakened in times of crisis — during austerity, displacement, or instability — and their denial remains a driving force behind marginalization and inequality, including gender inequality.

While national governments often define legal frameworks for these rights, local and regional governments are the ones who bring them to life, through policies and services that shape whether people truly enjoy these rights in practice.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Ensure universal, equitable access to healthcare, education, housing, social security and care systems across the entire life cycle, particularly for women, children, persons with disabilities, migrants, and other groups experiencing vulnerability.
- | Promote participatory systems where communities help shape education, health, housing, and care policies that affect them.
- | Adopt measures securing accountability, including monitoring, oversight, and accessible complaints mechanisms, to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.
- | Recognize the social rights listed above as fundamental human rights and embed them in local policies, development plans, and urban strategies across policy areas.
- | Integrate social rights into resilience planning, ensuring their protection during emergencies, crises, or displacement.
- | Adopt budgeting tools that prioritize social investment, reduce disparities, and support the progressive realization of social rights.

7. Right to Adequate Housing

Every person has the right to live in a safe, dignified, culturally appropriate, accessible, and affordable home, to be protected from forced evictions, harassment, or threats, and to have their dwelling connected to water, sanitation, energy, and waste management.

The right to adequate housing is recognized as a fundamental human right and encompasses the right to live in peace, security, and dignity. Adequate housing goes far beyond mere shelter: it is also a condition for access to all local public services, including the availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure. It also constitutes an essential condition for the full exercise of other rights, such as the right to health and to public participation.

Local and regional governments must lead efforts to recognise, protect and fulfil the right to adequate housing for all. From tracking housing supply and demand, promoting fair housing policies, regulating markets and prices, investing in public and social housing, to ensuring the social and ecological function of land and housing, local and regional governments can create fairer and more sustainable urban development.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Review land use planning instruments to foster more equitable urban development, including implementing anti-discriminatory housing policies, preventing harmful incentives in housing production and gentrification, and addressing socio-spatial segregation.
- Recognize and promote diverse forms of tenure, including cooperative housing, use-right models, and social production of habitat practices (SPH).
- Develop housing policies in line with climate resilience and broader climate action frameworks, integrating sustainable infrastructure, disaster risk reduction strategies, and green financing to make housing systems both resilient and inclusive.
- Establish and enforce regulations for land and housing markets, ensuring that local legislation refrains from, protects against, prevents, and remedies forced evictions, displacement, or other forms of human rights violations, and advocate for the same regulations at the national level, while tracking housing right violations.
- Establish a Municipal Land and Property Bank to identify and manage public or vacant lands and buildings, allocating them for sustainable social housing projects, based on principles of balanced densification, energy efficiency, and access to local services.
- Facilitate direct housing provision through a public housing agency and a Fair Rent Fund, promoting use-right models to ensure permanent affordability and prioritizing groups experiencing vulnerability.
- Develop a comprehensive neighborhood improvement program targeting informal settlements and areas with inadequate infrastructure, strengthening community-led democratic renewal and providing technical and financial support to neighborhood housing cooperatives.
- Regulate short-term rentals and protect rental rights by establishing and enforcing regulations to prevent illegal or unethical landlord practices, including exploitation, abuse, and the threat of forced evictions.
- Explore innovative financing tools such as housing trust funds, land-based financing, and pooled finance or public-community schemes to help bridge the finance housing gap.

8. Right to Education

Education is a transformative human right that empowers individuals to realize all other rights and engage fully in civic, cultural, economic, and political life at all ages. It is both a right in itself and an indispensable means of achieving other human rights. A human rights-based approach to education ensures equal access without discrimination, promotes participation, respects cultural identity and diversity, and offers quality education. It encompasses formal, non-formal, and informal education, including lifelong learning.

Local and regional governments play a vital role in making the right to education a reality. They are responsible for ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education at the local level.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Establish regulatory frameworks and public policies that view the city as an active educational entity, embedding schools, universities, cultural venues, libraries, community centers, and public spaces within an urban educational ecosystem, guided by territorial, intercultural, sustainable, and human-rights principles, prioritizing inclusivity and free access.
- Guarantee free, inclusive, and quality primary education for all, and progressively free secondary and higher education, regardless of gender, origin, ethnicity, status, or ability.
- Promote inclusive educational environments that respect gender identity and sexual orientation, cultural identity, language, and local knowledge.
- Implement municipal educational programs, in accordance with national regulations, that support or complement education, with a participatory approach from the community, using active methodologies to promote traditional knowledge, local identity, and democratic values.
- Create programs aimed at fighting illiteracy, particularly among adults who missed formal schooling.
- Ensure participation of students, families, and communities in shaping educational programs.
- Expand access to lifelong learning and post-compulsory education, particularly for marginalized youth and adults, by offering training in sustainable trades, human rights, financial literacy, arts, and culture. These programs can be delivered through community centers, libraries, and other public spaces, ensuring accessibility.
- Implement environmental education programs, in which institutions integrate sustainability practices such as school gardens, recycling, energy efficiency, and environmental education into their curriculum.

9. Right to Public Health Services and Well-being

Health is a human right and a public good: everybody has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including the right to sexual and reproductive health, and to the use of health facilities for the treatment of illness, across the entire life cycle. This right includes not only access to medical care but also to the **underlying determinants of health**: clean water, adequate housing, food and nutrition, healthy working conditions and environment, mental well-being, freedom and effective protection from all forms of violence and discrimination, as well as the adoption and effective implementation of laws, policies, and practices that respect, protect and fulfil sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Local and regional governments are at the frontline of healthcare provision and disease prevention, and can influence the social, economic and environmental conditions that shape health outcomes, ensuring that care and equality are at the center of health governance.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Acknowledge that health equity throughout the human life cycle is, in itself, a critical goal of a rights-based health system.
- Strengthen universal access to quality healthcare services, including preventive, primary, and specialized care for all people, regardless of migration status or income. This should include access to the full range of sexual and reproductive healthcare, integrated into local and national health planning.
- Prioritize preventive healthcare and promote public health education across the life cycle, providing accessible information on nutrition, hygiene, vaccines, and disease prevention.
- Implement a comprehensive local mental healthcare program with community psychologists, social workers, and health personnel, including support for survivors of violence — in particular violence against women — and addiction mental support.
- Address the social and economic determinants of health, such as housing, income, and education, in local health planning, and recognize their linkage with mental health.
- Promote physical activity and the right to leisure by investing in inclusive public spaces and community infrastructure, such as libraries, parks, sports, and cultural centers, while supporting activities that strengthen social cohesion.
- Implement mobile primary care units and telemedicine services to reach underserved populations, including in informal settlements.
- Establish municipal pharmacies with affordable prices and medical supply banks.
- Create an intersectoral reparative center for victims of gender-based violence and violent crimes.

10. Right to Care and Social Services

The right to care refers to the rights of unpaid care and support givers, care and support workers, and people who require care and support. Every person has the right to receive care from family, community, society, and the State, as well as access to basic services to meet fundamental needs and foster personal development. They also have the right to rest, to physical and mental health, to the enjoyment of personal time, and well-being as part of self-care, and to provide care under fair and protected conditions.

The right to give care, to receive care, and engage in self-care is essential to the realization of **human rights, gender equality, and social justice**. This right includes the recognition of unpaid and underpaid care work, primarily carried out by women, migrants, and other disadvantaged groups, as a structural source of inequality. A feminist and transformative approach to care sees it as a matter of service delivery, justice, redistribution, and power. It calls for structural changes across urban planning, labor policy, essential services delivery, education, and social protection systems, among others, to put sexual and reproductive health and rights at the center and achieve the full inclusion of a care perspective in urban governance.

As the foundation for the reproduction of both private and public life, care is a public good. Local and regional governments must ensure that social services fully respect the human rights of all users and care workers — whether formal or informal — while fairly redistributing care responsibilities, supporting unpaid caregivers, and fostering community solidarity and innovative local economies that promote dignified and inclusive societies.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Develop and implement a feminist local care strategy that ensures quality and rights-based services and support for people who require care and support, and support for caregivers, with particular attention to labor conditions.
- Promote a shared understanding of responsibility for care among public institutions, families, communities, the private sector, and between women and men, ensuring that care services are accessible and affordable, culturally appropriate, and adapted to different needs and capacities.
- Recognize and value unpaid and informal care domestic work, supporting the redistribution of care workloads, with a focus on women and gender equality.
- Set up a municipal care system, where health teams, social workers, and trained volunteers provide comprehensive support to older persons, children, persons with disabilities, or individuals who require care and support, offering assistance in food, hygiene, mobility, legal advice, and emotional and cultural support.
- Implement affordable and quality public day centers to support independent living and inclusion, particularly for older persons, individuals with intellectual disabilities, or those with reduced mobility, and their families and carers.
- Establish neighborhood-based “Rest Centers” and caregiver support networks.
- Implement a caregiver card for prioritized service in various public services, such as administrative or health appointments.
- Create a Community Time Bank, where neighbors can exchange hours of care and support for daily tasks, such as accompanying older persons, providing educational support for children, or support for persons with disabilities.

11. Right to Social Security

All people, even those outside the labor market, have the right to protection against social risks or contingencies without discrimination. Workers are entitled to enhanced protection.

The right to social security guarantees the individual’s protection against social risks and contingencies such as unemployment, illness, disability, and old age, ensuring income security and access to healthcare throughout the life course. It is essential for ensuring dignity and resilience in the face of uncertainties.

Local and regional governments, even where national systems predominate, can contribute by identifying gaps, extending support to underserved populations, and coordinating care systems at the local level.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Ensure that information on economic assistance and social benefits is available, easily accessible, and clear, including on digital platforms.
- Establish local social protection centers that simplify access to benefits, reduce administrative barriers, and provide personalized support for navigating social security systems.
- Support and coordinate with local public service systems, particularly care systems that include childcare, care and support for older persons, and support services for persons with disabilities.
- Promote social protection floors or aid programs that ensure a basic level of social security for all inhabitants, without discrimination of any kind, ensuring disability-related extra costs are accounted for.
- Provide emergency social assistance mechanisms that can be rapidly activated in times of crisis (economic shocks, pandemics, climate disasters).
- Collect and analyze data to identify and address gaps in access to national social security schemes, especially for workers in the informal economy, informal employment, migrants, and other marginalized groups.



Local and regional governments advancing cultural rights

- 12. Right to Heritage
- 13. Right to Creativity and Creative Industries
- 14. Right to Cultural Diversity
- 15. Right to a Culture of Human Rights
- 16. Right to Sustainable Tourism



Cultural rights protect the right of every person, individually and collectively, to participate in cultural life, to access, share and transmit heritage, memory and artistic expression, and to develop and express their identities freely, without discrimination. Culture is a public good, not a luxury. Cultural democracy guarantees that all inhabitants can discover, create, share, enjoy, and protect cultural resources. As a driver of transformation, culture is also a core dimension of human development, social inclusion, democratic renewal, peace, and trust.

Local and regional governments are responsible for enabling cultural rights by investing in diverse, inclusive, and accessible cultural policies and infrastructure, and safeguarding cultural rights for all.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Design and implement cultural policies that reflect the lived realities, histories, and aspirations of diverse populations.
- | Ensure equal access to cultural spaces, programs, and heritage without discrimination, by promoting accessible infrastructures and the decentralization of culture so that activities, resources, and heritage are available beyond central urban areas to peripheral neighborhoods and rural territories.
- | Use the transformative potential of culture to address social norms that reproduce exclusion, marginalization, and violence, especially against women, girls, and groups experiencing vulnerability, by promoting spaces to collectively and creatively rethink heritage, memories, imaginaries, values, and aspirations.
- | Promote cultural diversity and the meaningful participation of all communities and all genders — including migrant people, Indigenous peoples, girls, boys, and youth — in local cultural life and in shaping cultural futures. This includes public-community collaborations for the management of cultural infrastructures, services, and programs.
- | Support and invest in local cultural creators, arts education, and community heritage initiatives and institutions through public funding, training, and fair access to spaces and platforms.
- | Support the preservation of and engagement with local heritage, and ensure free access to municipal cultural centers or museums for all people, at least one day a week.
- | Integrate cultural dimensions into local strategies related to technology, the digital environment, and artificial intelligence (AI), considering how the digital transition transforms access, creation, production, distribution, and participation in cultural life, as well as the needs experienced by cultural actors.
- | Establish a municipal Fund for local creation, to finance projects by artists, cultural collectives, and independent cultural managers and ensure decent work and fair socioeconomic conditions for artists and cultural workers.

12. Right to Heritage

Every person has the right to access, participate in, preserve, transmit, and reinterpret cultural heritage in all its tangible and intangible forms. Cultural heritage includes monuments, sites, archives, languages, rituals, knowledge systems, memories, and practices, and must be understood as living and evolving, rather than fixed or static. **This right affirms that communities are not only beneficiaries of heritage, but also active custodians and interpreters of collective memory.**

Local and regional governments are responsible for recognizing plural histories, protecting memory and physical heritage from destruction or erasure, and ensuring that heritage policies reflect social diversity, historical justice, and intergenerational continuity.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Recognize and protect both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including oral traditions, languages, social practices, and collective memory.
- Integrate heritage protection into urban planning and climate and development policies to prevent displacement and cultural erasure.
- Ensure meaningful community participation and leadership—particularly by historically marginalized groups—in the identification, preservation, and interpretation of heritage.
- Provide public funding and technical support for community-led heritage initiatives and local cultural institutions.
- Support memory work and research that addresses past injustices, including colonialism, authoritarianism, displacement, and discrimination.
- Develop an intergenerational Living Heritage and Local Historical Memory Program, where community members register, narrate, and disseminate their local memories and histories, by creating heritage routes, oral archives, and collaborative exhibitions with the participation of Indigenous, migrant, and historically excluded communities.

13. Right to Creativity and Creative Industries

Every person has the right to create, express, share, and access artistic and cultural expressions **as spaces for imagination, critique, and social transformation.** Creativity is essential to freedom of expression, democratic debate, and the capacity to envision alternative futures. Art and culture are not only reflections of society, but also aspirational and transformative forces that expand the human rights imaginary and sustain utopian horizons.

Local and regional governments must ensure the material, symbolic, and institutional conditions that allow creativity to flourish freely, independently, and inclusively.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Adopt local sectoral plans or strategies addressing different cultural sectors (music, visual arts, design, architecture, fashion, gastronomy, etc.), either individually or as a whole, with an understanding of their specificities and needs to develop sustainable business models.
- Establish facilities and facilitate affordable access to cultural infrastructure, such as studios, rehearsal spaces, cultural centers, creative hubs, or business incubators.
- Guarantee freedom of artistic expression and protect artists, cultural workers, and cultural spaces from censorship, repression, or precarity.
- Recognize and protect intellectual property rights and other rights of artists and workers in the cultural sector.
- Promote partnerships between cultural actors and other actors in the economic sector, both public (e.g., Chamber of Commerce) and private (e.g., local businesses, banks).
- Implement a network of community cultural spaces in different neighborhoods, including libraries, managed jointly by the municipality and local cultural organizations, to offer free workshops, artistic residencies, exhibitions, performances, and all activities that promote participation in cultural life.
- Provide equitable public funding for diverse cultural expressions, including experimental, community-based, and non-commercial art, including grants, micro-credits, sponsorship, patronage, and public or mixed economic schemes.

14. Right to Cultural Diversity

Every person has the right to express, maintain, transform, and transmit their cultural identity – individually and collectively – without discrimination. Cultural diversity is not a threat to social cohesion, but a source of creativity, resilience, and democratic vitality.

Local and regional governments are central to affirming the equal dignity of all cultural expressions and positioning interculturality and plurality as core strengths of urban life and identity. They are key actors in preventing cultural homogenization, exclusion, and assimilation, and in creating conditions where diverse identities can coexist, interact, and evolve.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Promote inclusive cultural policies that reflect linguistic, ethnic, religious, gender, generational, and migratory diversity.
- Foster appreciation, knowledge, and vitality of local languages and linguistic diversity in local policies, including the school curriculum and in other educational activities.
- Integrate cultural diversity into urban planning, preventing displacement of culturally significant neighborhoods and community spaces.
- Support culture-makers from outside traditional institutions through targeted funding, increased visibility, and institutional recognition.
- Ensure access to public spaces and media for diverse cultural expressions and community narratives.
- Prevent discrimination and cultural exclusion in education, public services, and cultural institutions.
- Create spaces for intercultural dialogue and exchange, while respecting the autonomy and self-definition of cultural communities.

15. Right to a Culture of Human Rights

Every person has the right to be provided with the symbolic, emotional, and imaginative foundations through which rights are understood, claimed, and transformed. A culture of human rights is not inherited automatically; it is a living and collective process through which people create meaning, express identities, imagine futures, and contest injustice.

Local and regional governments play a central role in nurturing ecosystems of learning where culture, education, and social cohesion intersect to support human rights-based transformation and democratic renewal.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Ensure freedom of expression and support cultural initiatives – such as film, theatre, literature, museums, or festivals – that foster critical reflection on human rights.
- Integrate art and culture into public spaces, education, sports centers, and social policies as tools for dialogue, critique, cohesion, and inclusion.
- Integrate human rights education across formal and non-formal education systems, using culturally relevant and participatory approaches.
- Ensure access to human rights education for all ages, including children, youth, adults, and older persons.
- Promote public debate, memory work, and cultural programming as tools for democratic learning and rights awareness.
- Implement cultural programs and actions that promote health and well-being, peace and respect, a sense of belonging, and tackle territorial discrimination and polarization.



16. Right to Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is not neutral. Sustainable tourism must contribute to the holistic well-being of host communities by generating decent work, supporting inclusive local economies, improving public services provision, and enhancing the quality of life for people, while protecting cultural and natural heritage and safeguarding ecological balance.

Local and regional governments play a central role in steering tourism toward the public interest, ensuring environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability over short-term economic gains. Local and regional governments must ensure that tourism acts as a driver of equitable economic development, where inhabitants are active co-creators, decision-makers, and fair beneficiaries.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Design and implement tourism policies that place cultural rights, environmental protection, and social justice at their core, ensuring that tourism development aligns with local needs, capacities, and cultural values.
- Promote community-based, cooperative, and social economy tourism models that generate decent work, fair incomes, and local value chains, especially for women, youth, and informal cultural workers.
- Safeguard living cultural heritage from commodification and distortion, ensuring that tourism does not appropriate, or exploit local traditions, rituals, and identities.
- Regulate tourism flows to prevent overtourism, displacement, rising housing costs, and environmental degradation, through zoning, carrying-capacity assessments, and limits on short-term rentals where necessary.
- Ensure that tourism revenues contribute directly to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, public cultural infrastructure, or housing and community services in affected areas, through transparent and redistributive mechanisms.
- Adopt binding human rights due diligence requirements for tourism operators, including platforms and short-term rental companies, ensuring accountability for social and environmental impacts.
- Conduct assessments on the local impacts of tourism, with a specific focus on gentrification, displacement risks, and impacts on local cultural life.



Local and regional governments promoting economic rights

- 17. Right to Work
- 18. Right to a Human Rights Economy and Financial Inclusion
- 19. Right to Transparency and Integrity



Economic rights are central to human dignity, equality, and sustainable development. These rights ensure that all people can support themselves and their families, and participate in the economy without discrimination. They are also essential for reducing poverty, addressing systemic inequality, and promoting social inclusion.

Local and regional governments are crucial actors in making economic rights tangible: they shape local development models, manage public budgets, serve as major employers, and influence labor markets and economic ecosystems.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Develop a clear concept and strategy for a Human Rights Economy (HRE) at the local level, engaging labor market institutions, worker organizations and unions, social economy actors, and civil society.
- | Recognize and support diverse economic sectors, including the informal, popular, care, and social and solidarity economies, through public policy, investment, and access to services and infrastructure.
- | Adopt inclusive local employment plans, ensuring that municipalities, as employers, lead by example through equal pay policies, fair working conditions, and affirmative action for underrepresented groups.
- | Use public procurement as a tool to advance economic rights, requiring contractors and service providers to respect labor standards, non-discrimination, and sustainability commitments.
- | Ensure transparency and participation in local economic and budgetary planning, enabling inhabitants to influence priorities and monitor spending.
- | Promote the creation of green and decent jobs, aligning local economic development with climate goals, environmental justice, and social inclusion.
- | Strengthen social protection systems and coordinate with national actors to ensure income security, healthcare access, and labor protections for all, including informal workers.
- | Promote fair taxation and fiscal justice, ensuring that local resources are mobilized and distributed in ways that reduce inequality and support public services.

17. Right to Work

Every person has the right to earn a living through work that one freely chooses or accepts. It requires that all people can access employment that is productive, fairly compensated and conducted in conditions of dignity and safety. It encompasses the right to non-discrimination and equal opportunities, freedom of association, and protection against occupational risks, as well as access to vocational training and skills development as the foundation for economic autonomy.

Local and regional governments play a key role in fostering inclusive labor markets, supporting local job creation, providing technical and vocational training and employment services, and leading by example through equitable employment practices within public institutions.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Develop local employment programs targeting youth, women, persons with disabilities, and other groups facing barriers to the labor market, particularly in strategic sectors that are environmentally and socially sustainable.
- Promote and protect freedom of association by ensuring that all workers can organize and join unions, while facilitating local social dialogue mechanisms that bring together trade unions, employers, and public authorities.
- Ensure fair and inclusive employment practices in municipal hiring, with attention to diversity and gender equality.
- Promote labor protections and HRBA in public procurement, requiring contractors to adhere to international human rights and labor standards, and collaborating with labor unions and workers to ensure just and favorable working conditions.
- Support the creation of jobs through green economy initiatives, local cooperatives, and the social and solidarity economy.
- Adopt local living wage policies, ensuring that public employees and contracted workers earn wages sufficient to meet the cost of living.
- Offer vocational training, employment services, and entrepreneurship support programs to expand access to employment and income generation.

18. Right to a Human Rights Economy and Financial Inclusion

A Human Rights Economy (HRE) places people and the planet at the center of economic decision-making. It recognizes the role of diverse local economies — including informal, care, and solidarity-based systems — and seeks to eliminate systemic barriers to financial access, participation, and mobility.

Local and regional governments can drive a HRE by designing inclusive economic policies, regulating markets to promote fairness, and fostering financial inclusion.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Formally recognize the importance of different forms of economy, including informal, care, and solidarity-based systems.
- Advance the recognition and protection of informal workers and their contribution to the local economy, including their inclusion in social protection schemes.
- Promote access to basic financial services by ensuring all individuals can open and use a payment account, regardless of their financial circumstances, employment status, income level, credit history, or insolvency.
- Promote financial inclusion by supporting access to credit, micro-credit and banking for underserved groups.
- Invest in local economies through urban and rural agriculture, micro-enterprise development, and support for local cooperatives.
- Advance gender equality in the economy by supporting women’s access to employment, livelihood, and entrepreneurship, addressing the unpaid care work they bear, and combating workplace discrimination and harassment.
- Encourage businesses to adopt inclusive hiring practices and align with the Conventions and Recommendations set by the International Labour Organization (ILO), recognizing the value of diversity and local labor.
- Encourage businesses to engage with the United Nations Global Compact on Business and Human Rights.

19. Right to Transparency and Integrity

All people have the right to request and receive, in accessible formats, information on budgets, public spending, fiscal policies, procurement, subsidies, and economic programs, as well as on their implementation, evaluation, and audit results.

Transparency and integrity are essential to the realization of all economic rights. They ensure that resources are managed fairly and that decision-making processes are accountable and inclusive. Without transparent governance, corruption and inequality thrive, eroding public trust and undermining development.

Local and regional governments play a critical role in upholding transparency and integrity by ensuring that public budgets, procurement processes, and economic policies are open, participatory, and grounded in human rights principles. This responsibility also extends to the private sector: local and regional governments must promote transparency and social responsibility among businesses and ensure effective regulatory oversight.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Guarantee transparency and access to public information through open municipal data portals, participatory audits, and clear communication strategies.
- Ensure community participation in budgetary and policy decisions, including through participatory budgeting.
- Implement anti-corruption and ethics policies or training in public administration.
- Strengthen regulation of the private sector by introducing or enforcing local legislation that requires businesses to respect human rights, disclose social and environmental impacts, and align their operations with principles of transparency and accountability.
- Establish clear guidelines for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and gender equality principles, including disclosure of agreements, impact assessments, risk-sharing mechanisms, and social and environmental safeguards, to prevent exploitative arrangements that undermine economic rights.
- Make public the criteria and data used to allocate public investments across neighborhoods, ensuring equitable distribution and prioritization of underserved communities.
- Establish participatory monitoring mechanisms — such as independent audit bodies or social observatories — and promote civic education and digital tools that empower inhabitants to track public spending, report irregularities, and actively engage in local governance.



Local and regional governments materializing substantive democracy, civil and political rights

20. Right to Freedom of Media, Opinion, Religion and Belief
21. Right to Inclusive Citizenship and Welcoming Territories
22. Right to Participatory Democracy and Co-creation of the City
23. Right to Human Security and Peace
24. Right to Information and Digital Rights
25. Right to Justice



Civil and political rights — including the freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, participation, and access to information and justice — are the foundation of democratic societies. These rights ensure that every person, regardless of identity, origin, or migration status, can shape public life, hold institutions accountable, and engage in collective decision-making. Substantive democracy goes beyond elections: it means real, inclusive, and continuous participation in how cities are governed.

Local and regional governments are uniquely positioned to bring civil and political rights to life. Their proximity to people allows them to design participatory structures that respond to people's lived realities. In the context of declining trust in representative institutions and growing civic disillusionment, cities and territories have a renewed responsibility — and opportunity — to reimagine democracy through inclusive governance, solidarity-based public policies, and transparent decision-making.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Recognize the listed civil and political rights as enforceable human rights within local charters, ordinances, and policy frameworks.
- | Develop inclusive civic education programs to strengthen democratic culture and rights awareness, particularly among children, youth, and underrepresented communities.
- | Ensure legal and physical spaces for civil society, cultural groups, and grassroots organizations to operate freely and safely.
- | Establish and institutionalize participatory mechanisms such as participatory budgeting, neighborhood assemblies, and community consultations.
- | Promote digital democracy tools that enhance access to information, decision-making, and public services, while ensuring data protection, inclusion, and accessibility for all.
- | Adopt open government principles, with proactive disclosure of information in formats and through platforms that favour engagement. Support initiatives that allow people to explore this information.
- | Protect personal data and ensure data collection and processing comply with human rights, including health data, recognizing the growing risks of digital surveillance framed as violence prevention.
- | Strengthen municipal ombudsman or human rights offices that monitor civil and political rights and provide accessible mechanisms for complaints and redress.

20. Right to Freedom of Media, Opinion, Religion and Belief

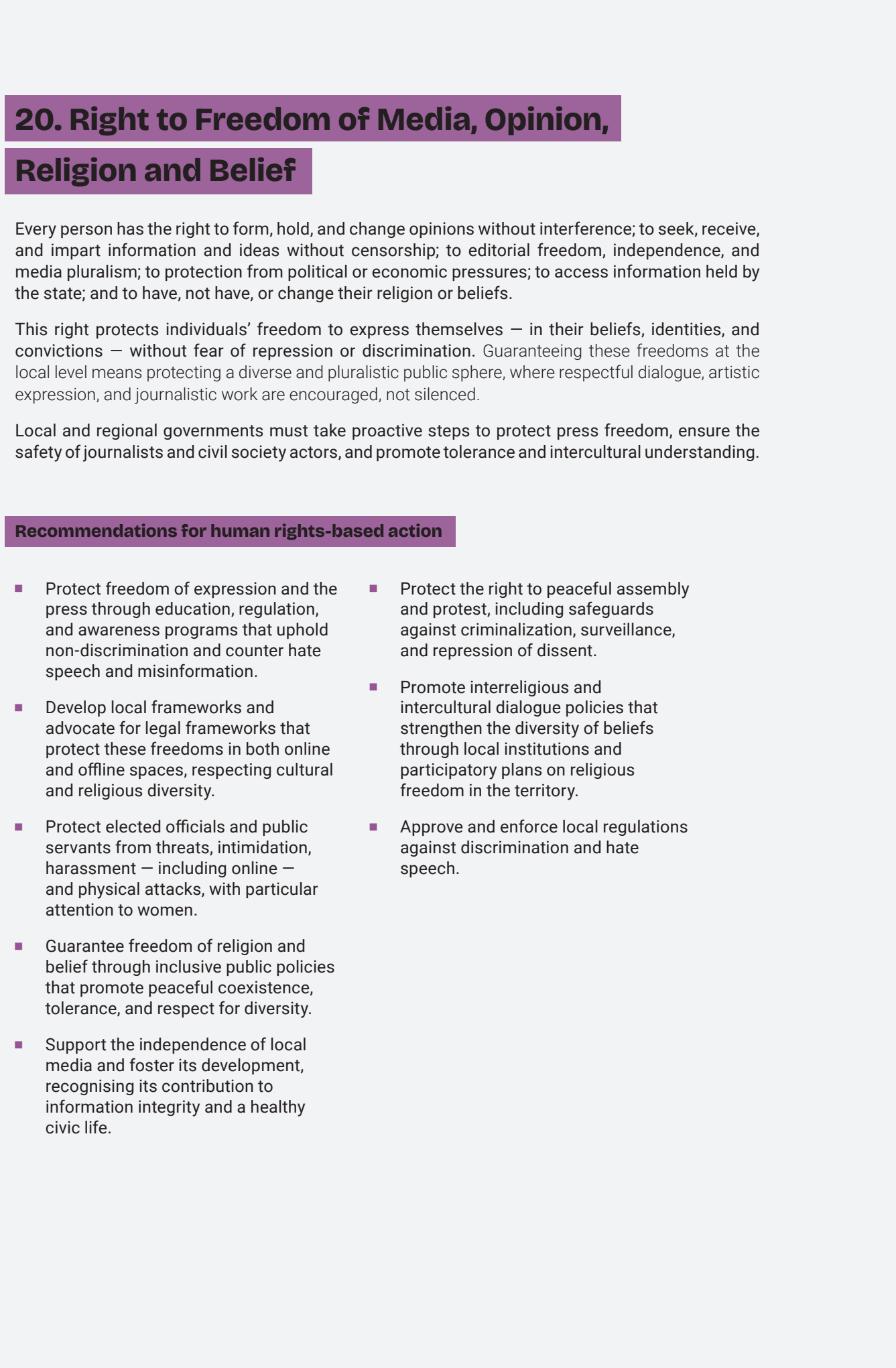
Every person has the right to form, hold, and change opinions without interference; to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas without censorship; to editorial freedom, independence, and media pluralism; to protection from political or economic pressures; to access information held by the state; and to have, not have, or change their religion or beliefs.

This right protects individuals’ freedom to express themselves – in their beliefs, identities, and convictions – without fear of repression or discrimination. Guaranteeing these freedoms at the local level means protecting a diverse and pluralistic public sphere, where respectful dialogue, artistic expression, and journalistic work are encouraged, not silenced.

Local and regional governments must take proactive steps to protect press freedom, ensure the safety of journalists and civil society actors, and promote tolerance and intercultural understanding.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Protect freedom of expression and the press through education, regulation, and awareness programs that uphold non-discrimination and counter hate speech and misinformation.
- Develop local frameworks and advocate for legal frameworks that protect these freedoms in both online and offline spaces, respecting cultural and religious diversity.
- Protect elected officials and public servants from threats, intimidation, harassment – including online – and physical attacks, with particular attention to women.
- Guarantee freedom of religion and belief through inclusive public policies that promote peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and respect for diversity.
- Support the independence of local media and foster its development, recognising its contribution to information integrity and a healthy civic life.
- Protect the right to peaceful assembly and protest, including safeguards against criminalization, surveillance, and repression of dissent.
- Promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue policies that strengthen the diversity of beliefs through local institutions and participatory plans on religious freedom in the territory.
- Approve and enforce local regulations against discrimination and hate speech.



21. Right to Inclusive Citizenship and Welcoming Territories

Every person has the right to equal treatment and opportunities in access to rights, services, and spaces; to belong to the territory where they live; to participate in decisions that affect urban life; to protection from hate speech, criminalization, and violence; to recognition of legal personality and access to essential documents and civil registries; as well as to accessible and universal urban design in safe public spaces.

Inclusive citizenship means that every person – regardless of their legal or migration status, ethnic background, gender identity, or other identity markers – feels recognized, protected, and welcomed in the city. This right is about belonging, and is central to the Right to the City: the ability to access services, participate in decisions, and live with dignity and safety.

Local and regional governments must create spaces of care and welcome, where barriers to participation are identified and removed, and where everyone’s contributions to the city are valued. This requires legal, institutional, and cultural shifts toward openness, equity, and solidarity.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Generate urban environments and services that are welcoming and accessible for all people, including newcomers and historically excluded communities.
- Establish legal and policy frameworks that promote inclusive citizenship, by tackling barriers to participation and protection.
- Develop care policies for people experiencing extreme vulnerability, with an intersectional lens.
- Design and implement municipal policies specifically focused on integration support, ensuring a comprehensive process for newly arrived people, including clear information about services and legal, social, and community support.
- Implement anti-discrimination and inclusion policies across all municipal services, ensuring dignified, respectful, and culturally appropriate care.
- Implement and/or strengthen citizen participation offices within local institutions, ensuring the accessibility of services for all.
- Establish citizen service offices or desks that facilitate interaction between institutions, the service network, and people.



22. Right to Participatory Democracy and Co-creation of the City

Every person has the right to actively participate in public affairs, with access to clear and accessible information on urban plans and policies; to take part in the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies; to have their local and community knowledge recognized; and to co-manage public spaces, services, and urban commons.

Participatory democracy is the practice of involving inhabitants in shaping public policies, city plans, budgets, and local decisions. It transforms the relationship between governments and communities — from one of management to one of shared governance, including public-community collaboration mechanisms for the management of goods and services.

Local and regional governments are well-positioned and have a duty to facilitate participatory processes and co-create solutions with communities that respond to their needs and aspirations. Doing so ensures that policies are more legitimate and effective, fostering a people-government contract built on trust, legitimacy, and civic empowerment.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Create permanent platforms or mechanisms — in person or online — for participatory human rights-based decision-making or consultations on urban planning, policy-making, or resource allocation among others.
- Ensure continued participation and make sure participatory mechanisms are *truly* participatory, facilitating and promoting the participation of women, care workers, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons experiencing homelessness, migrants, and other typically excluded groups.
- Promote public-community collaboration mechanisms for the management of goods and services.
- Build a culture of participation from a young age by integrating democratic education in schools and youth spaces.
- Ensure participatory mechanisms take into consideration unpaid care and support responsibilities rights-holders may have (including time and mobility constraints), as well as care and support needs they may have for themselves.
- Allocate part of the municipal or public budget for human rights-based participatory budgeting.
- Establish local or neighborhood councils involving civil society and diverse stakeholders.
- Create or promote digital tools that facilitate direct dialogue between inhabitants and the government, including proactive disclosure of information or community-led monitoring and evaluation of municipal policies.

23. Right to Human Security and Peace

Every person has the right to the protection of their life, integrity, and freedoms; to equal and safe access — preventing violence — to public spaces, transport, services, and facilities; to social urban planning and neighborhood regeneration; and to access mechanisms for reporting, redress, and urban justice.

The right to peace is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for the realization of all other rights. At the local level, human security and peace are not limited to policing or the absence of conflict — they involve building environments where all people can live free from violence, discrimination or fear.

Local and regional governments play a critical role in advancing peacebuilding and urban safety by fostering inclusive communities, promoting social cohesion, and addressing the structural causes of violence. Local and regional governments must lead efforts in prioritizing prevention over repression and fostering dialogue and conflict mediation, particularly in contexts marked by violence or social tension.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Explicitly recognize and address structural drivers of violence or radicalization, including inequality, segregation, discrimination, marginalization, harmful social norms or toxic masculinities, and lack of access to housing, education, employment, and public services.
- Design and implement comprehensive local human security policies and violence prevention strategies that are data-driven and focused on prevention, care, and the protection of rights, combining education, employment pathways, mentoring, sports, arts, and civic participation, with particular attention to children and young people in situations of vulnerability and in high-risk areas.
- Actively involve local communities, traditional leaders, and marginalized groups in decision-making processes related to conflict prevention and security.
- Develop and implement local action plans to prevent and combat organized crime and human trafficking, including sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, and trafficking of children and migrants. These plans should be victim-centered and grounded in human rights.
- Establish clear municipal protocols for responding to violence against women and other gender diversities, protests, forced displacement, infrastructures failures or shutdowns, public health crises (including pandemic and epidemics), natural environmental disasters, or war.
- Strengthen collaboration between local and regional governments, national institutions, and civil society to ensure effective responses to emergencies, violence, and conflict.
- Establish local mediation centers and ensure safe, accessible, confidential and, where necessary, anonymous reporting channels — such as hotlines or digital platforms — so that all individuals can report violence, insecurity, or human rights violations, including those committed by authorities.

24. Right to Information and Digital Rights

Every person has the right to seek, receive, and impart information without prior censorship, to access the internet universally and affordably, and to exercise their rights in safe digital environments.

The right to information is essential for transparency, accountability, and informed participation. Digital rights include the right to access the internet, to privacy and data protection, and to freedom from online discrimination or surveillance.

In an increasingly digital world, local and regional governments must guarantee that all people – especially those facing digital exclusion – can access, use, and shape digital and AI technologies in ways that promote rights and inclusion.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Ensure universal access to public information through open data, transparency laws or norms, and social monitoring.
- Recognize that access to information covers more than just government information, and includes a free press, access to scientific literature, and access to a full and relevant library collection.
- Protect digital rights in local legislation, including data protection, online safety, and human rights-based tech and AI governance.
- Run public education campaigns on online safety, privacy, AI use, digital rights and digital citizenship, including in schools.
- Promote digital inclusion through training, infrastructure, and support for digital literacy for underserved groups, ensuring that digital literacy goes beyond technical skills and incorporates information literacy and critical thinking.
- Prioritize the use of open-source and interoperable digital solutions in local and regional governments to strengthen transparency, public control, and the common good.
- Ensure that automated or AI systems used in public administration respect the principles of transparency, fairness, and non-discrimination.
- Set up user-friendly municipal open data portals and accountability dashboards.
- Create community centers with free internet access and digital support services, optimally co-located in existing institutions such as libraries or post offices to reduce entry barriers.

25. Right to Justice

For rights to be meaningful, they must be enforceable. Access to justice is the right of every person to have effective remedies to obtain redress, resolve disputes, and hold public and private actors accountable. Every person has the right to effective judicial and administrative remedies for human rights violations, which must be suitable, adequate, and efficient, as well as to be heard and to receive legal defense and assistance.

Local and regional governments can facilitate justice by supporting legal assistance services, promoting alternative dispute resolution, and ensuring institutions are transparent, fair, and accessible.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Identify the gaps in access to legal services for populations experiencing vulnerability and address them.
- Promote community-based conflict resolution and mediation, especially in neighborhoods experiencing vulnerabilities.
- Enable meaningful participation of civil society in the monitoring of local justice systems, including through independent oversight bodies and participatory audits.
- Establish municipal legal aid centers offering free or low-cost services.
- Create local ombuds offices or liaison mechanisms with national human rights institutions.
- Inform people in irregular administrative situations of their rights and available complaint mechanisms when they are victims of crimes, providing support throughout the filing of the complaint and the legal process.
- Promote mediation programs in collaboration with business and civil society, encouraging peaceful resolution of disputes in community-based and public spaces through dialogue-based approaches.
- Develop due diligence protocols for companies operating in the local territory, requiring them to assess, prevent, and address human rights risks in their operations and supply chains, in line with international standards.



Local and regional governments safeguarding a sustainable environment and inclusive territorial planning

- 26. Right to Accessibility and Proximity
- 27. Right to Inclusive Public Spaces and Transformative Urban Planning
- 28. Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment
- 29. Right to Climate Action and Justice



The right to a sustainable environment and inclusive territorial planning means that all people have the right to live in healthy, resilient, and well-planned urban and rural areas where land, resources, and ecosystems are managed equitably and responsibly. This right is essential to realizing a wide range of other rights – including the rights to housing, health, food and mobility – and to confronting the escalating impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-spatial inequality.

Local and regional governments, through their legal powers and daily planning decisions, shape the lived environment of rights. Their decisions on how space is organized, who has access to land and infrastructure, and how environmental risks are mitigated directly impact inhabitants' ability to enjoy rights.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Advocate for the legal personality of nature and ecosystems and recognize nature as a subject of rights.
- | Integrate measurable climate resilience and sustainability goals into all urban and territorial development policies.
- | Integrate disaster risk reduction and climate resilience strategies through a rights- and equity-based approach.
- | Implement collegiate bodies, audiences, conferences, and public consultations and debates, and recognize popular initiative processes in legislative proposals and urban development planning.
- | Direct public investment toward projects that promote equity, environmental protection, and biodiversity preservation.
- | Apply inclusive zoning, land value capture financing, and regulatory tools to redistribute urban benefits and prevent exclusion.
- | Inhibit real estate speculation by adopting urban norms for the just distribution of the burdens and benefits generated by the urbanization process, and by the adaptation of economic, tributary, financial, and public expenditure policy instruments to the objectives of equitable and sustainable urban development.
- | Ensure that the collective social and cultural interest prevails above individual property rights and speculative interests, and that social and cultural rights are integrated into decision-making in this area.

26. Right to Accessibility and Proximity

All people — regardless of age, gender, income, ability or other characteristics — should have equitable access to essential services, public spaces, and opportunities within a reasonable distance from their homes. This right encompasses the principles of sustainability, inclusion, and care, ensuring that daily needs can be met locally through well-connected, safe, and vibrant neighborhoods. It promotes compact, mixed-use, and resilient cities where proximity supports individual, societal, and environmental well-being.

Local and regional governments are key enablers of this right. Through their responsibilities in urban planning, land use regulation, service provision, and infrastructure development, they determine how equitably opportunities and resources are distributed across the territory. Their leadership is essential for designing urban environments that reduce spatial inequalities, foster social cohesion, promote peace and the absence of violence, and advance the ecological transition.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Map inequalities in access to services and infrastructure using disaggregated data to identify spatial exclusion or priority services for targeted action.
- Adopt universal accessibility standards in all public infrastructure projects and urban design.
- Promote proximity-based urban models, such as the “15-minute city,” the “30-minute territory,” or the “Sustainable Proximities” framework, to ensure balanced access to housing, work, care, education, culture, and governance spaces.
- Promote green proximity by ensuring every inhabitant lives near parks, trees, and climate-resilient infrastructure (shade, cooling areas, water access).
- Redistribute care work through the provision of accessible/close-to-home public services and infrastructure.
- Invest in safe and inclusive pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, as well as in accessible and affordable integrated multimodal public transport systems.
- Strengthen neighborhood-level governance and participatory planning to ensure that proximity planning reflects the diverse needs, capacities, and aspirations of all people.
- Develop neighborhood equity indicators to monitor progress in reducing spatial disparities in access to services and opportunities.

27. Right to Inclusive Public Spaces and Transformative Urban Planning

All people have the right to public spaces designed without physical, sensory, or cognitive barriers; to autonomous and safe use of these spaces; to flexible recreational spaces for community and cultural use; and to the design, management, and care of spaces with community participation.

Public spaces are common goods that are transformed through urban planning as a tool focused on human scale and daily life, to guarantee rights and reduce inequalities through interventions aimed at addressing structural disparities.

Through land use regulations, spatial planning, and investment decisions, local and regional governments shape how public spaces are created, distributed, and governed. Local and regional governments play a central role in upholding this right by ensuring that urban planning processes are participatory, equitable, and responsive to diverse needs, and that public spaces are distributed throughout the territory.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Integrate climate adaptation measures, green infrastructure, and nature-based solutions into all urban planning processes.
- Design and manage public spaces with direct community participation, particularly from women, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups.
- Preserve and support local markets and community spaces that serve as proximity-based anchors of daily life.
- Establish special zones for popular economy and culture, allowing self-employed workers, service providers, and informal vendors to carry out their activities in public spaces.
- Expand and maintain urban green spaces, forests, and natural infrastructure in all neighborhoods.
- Prioritize the development of inclusive public infrastructure in underserved and informal settlements, including spaces such as libraries and cultural centers that can support community cohesion.



28. Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

Every person has the right to a healthy environment, access to information, and participation in environmental decision-making, protection from risks, and effective mechanisms to seek redress for harm. Pollution, environmental degradation, and the loss of biodiversity undermine this right and threaten the foundations of life itself.

Local and regional governments must act as stewards of the environment by embedding ecological principles into all planning, resource allocation, and service delivery, ensuring that ecological impact is not an afterthought but a baseline consideration.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Embed climate risk assessments into planning and zoning decisions.
- Implement green corridors, urban forests, and nature-based infrastructure to enhance resilience to heat, flooding, and biodiversity loss.
- Establish municipal composting facilities, recycling hubs, and partnerships with local cooperatives to manage waste sustainably.
- Promote circular economy strategies and zero-waste policies through regulation and education.
- Require private projects to undergo rigorous Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), ensuring that assessments consider social equity, health impacts, and climate resilience factors.
- Establish systems to monitor, assess, and publicly report on air, water, and soil quality, and promote public awareness and the skills needed to understand and use this information.
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms and access to environmental justice to ensure the right is effective and protected against environmental abuses.



29. Right to Climate Action and Justice

Every person has the right to the protection of their life, health, access to water, housing, food, and culture, as well as the protection of the rights of present and future generations.

Climate change is not only an environmental issue but also a human rights issue, affecting the rights to life, health, housing, water, food, or work. **Municipalities have a duty to ensure that climate policies, infrastructure investments, and adaptation measures reduce existing inequalities rather than deepen them.** This includes protecting low-income households, marginalized communities, and future generations from both climate impacts and from unfair burdens created by mitigation and transition policies.

The climate crisis is a systemic multiplier and a matter of justice. Local and regional governments must reduce emissions within their jurisdiction, strengthen climate adaptation, and deliver a just transition that safeguards livelihoods, access to essential services, and social cohesion. Municipal responsibility also includes addressing the local environmental and social impacts of public procurement, land use, transport, housing, energy systems, and financial decisions.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Develop and implement climate action plans grounded in equity and human rights, ensuring that mitigation and adaptation measures explicitly address the needs of low-income households, marginalized groups, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.
- Establish just transition plans for decarbonization that phase out fossil fuels, protect jobs, support affected workers, promote inclusive green job creation, and prevent maladaptation and “green gentrification”-induced displacement.
- Ensure climate action integrates cultural rights, care systems, and intergenerational perspectives to build trust and social cohesion.
- Design climate adaptation measures that prioritise those most exposed to climate risks, including heat, flooding, poor air quality, water stress, and energy insecurity.
- Protect access to essential services during climate transition, including energy, water, housing, mobility, and healthcare, especially for households experiencing vulnerability.
- Align public procurement, investment, and budgeting with climate justice objectives, ensuring that municipal spending supports low-carbon solutions that are socially fair, accessible, and affordable.
- Ensure meaningful participation of inhabitants and communities in climate planning and implementation, particularly those most affected by climate impacts and transition measures, with attention to women and racially marginalized communities.
- Monitor and publicly report on the social and equity impacts of climate policies, using disaggregated data to identify who benefits and who bears the costs.
- Advocate for national commitments on Loss and Damage mechanisms that support local and regional governments.

Local and regional governments fostering equality and non-discrimination

- 30. Rights of Women
- 31. Rights of Children and Youth
- 32. Rights of Older Persons
- 33. Rights of Migrants, Asylum-Seekers, Internally Displaced People and Refugees
- 34. Rights of Ethnic Diversities and Freedom from Racism
- 35. Rights of Indigenous People
- 36. Rights of Gender and Sexual Diversity
- 37. Rights of All Persons with Disabilities



Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental pillars of human rights. Despite international commitments, discrimination – based on gender, ethnicity, migration status, disability, sexual orientation, or age – remains a persistent barrier to the full enjoyment of rights and access to services at the local level.

Equality and non-discrimination are at the core of Human Rights and lie at the center of the actions taken by Human Rights Cities and Territories worldwide. Local and regional governments, as the closest governance body to inhabitants, have a crucial role in dismantling these barriers and fostering inclusive urban environments.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- | Recognize and protect the fundamental rights of all people, ensuring legal protection against all forms of violence and discrimination.
- | Institutionalize comprehensive equality and anti-discrimination frameworks embedded in municipal policies and budgets to prevent discrimination against gender, ethnicity, migration status, disability, sexual orientation, age, or other factors, including affirmative measures for historically excluded groups.
- | Create intersectional strategies to ensure representation of women, children and youth, older persons, migrants, LGBTQI+ persons, Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.
- | Establish local equality offices or ombudsman offices dedicated to monitoring and enforcing non-discrimination, and ensure reasonable accommodations in procedures and services for persons with disabilities or other access barriers.
- | Establish mandatory training for public officials and servants, law enforcement officers, and frontline workers on intercultural competencies, unconscious bias, racism, gender sensitivity, human rights, and all other forms of discrimination.
- | Foster or support awareness-raising campaigns that celebrate diversity and promote social cohesion.
- | Collect or improve disaggregated data collection on service access, outcomes, and discrimination complaints to identify inequalities and track progress toward inclusion, while respecting human rights and data protection.

30. Rights of Women

Women’s rights and the right to gender equality guarantee that all women and girls can live with freedom, safety, and dignity — fully participating in the social, political, cultural, and economic life of the city without discrimination or violence, including full control over their bodies and sexual and reproductive health.

Local and regional governments have a vital obligation to uphold women’s rights by embedding gender equality in all aspects of urban governance. Advancing gender equality is not a marginal issue — it is central to the realization of human rights, social equity, and societies of care.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Support women’s safe and meaningful participation in local politics, and ensure gender parity quotas (i.e. 50%-50%) in elected bodies and municipal leadership positions.
- Implement gender-sensitive urban planning (e.g., safe street lighting and transportation).
- Create and fund shelters, femicide protocols, legal aid, and psychological support for survivors of violence against women, in all its forms.
- Run school and community education and awareness campaigns addressing gender roles and stereotypes, and promoting a culture of consent.
- Promote the right to professional integration through gender parity, access to leadership positions, gender diversity in professions, and equal pay policies.
- Implement and promote measures to redistribute unpaid care responsibilities, such as paid parental leaves and flexible working arrangements.
- Support women’s equal enjoyment of economic rights, including equal access to decent work, social security, and financial services, such as microcredit.
- Ensure access to the full continuum of sexual and reproductive healthcare within local healthcare systems.
- Establish observatories to monitor and combat violence against women and publicize data.

31. Rights of Children and Youth

The right of every child and young person to a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment ensures that they can grow, learn, and thrive free from violence, discrimination, and neglect. This right encompasses access to quality education, healthcare, play, protection, and meaningful participation in decisions that affect their lives.

Local and regional governments play a key role in realizing these rights by designing and implementing child- and youth-friendly policies, infrastructure, and services, and by guaranteeing education and inclusion for all.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Guarantee universal, free, and quality education at all levels, including inclusive secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, and lifelong learning opportunities for youth, as well as access to information and knowledge via infrastructures such as libraries.
- Fight against the intergenerational transmission of poverty, hunger, inequality and conflicts.
- Protect the rights of children and youth who are “young carers” — those providing unpaid care — by safeguarding their access to education, rest, play, and, for young adults, the right to work.
- Design and maintain safe, accessible parks, playgrounds, sports centers, and recreational spaces.
- Prevent school absenteeism and early leaving through scholarship programs and family support services.
- Support early childhood development centers and afterschool programs, especially for marginalized groups, integrated into existing infrastructures such as libraries and youth centers whenever possible.
- Engage children and youth in municipal decision-making through councils, forums, children and youth parliaments, participatory budgeting, co-creation opportunities, and civic education programs.
- Support child- and youth-led organizations and movements from civil society and their engagement in local public and political life.
- Implement child and youth protection services, including confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms for abuse, violence, and exploitation, and programs addressing mental health and well-being.



32. Rights of Older Persons

Every older person has the right to live with dignity, maintain independence, access health care and social security, live free from violence, participate in social and cultural life, be recognized as an active social actor, and have access to justice and accessible environments. Recognizing and upholding these rights is crucial for combating ageism, isolation, and vulnerability, and for building cities where people can age healthily and remain active members of their communities.

Local and regional governments play a pivotal role in ensuring age-inclusive urban environments by adapting public infrastructure and services to meet the specific needs of older adults.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Provide healthcare focused on chronic conditions, mental health, and mobility.
- Develop age-friendly infrastructure, such as ramps, public seating, pedestrian crossings.
- Combat social isolation by promoting community centers, social activities, volunteer programs, and intergenerational initiatives that connect children, young people, and older persons, making use of existing infrastructures such as libraries.
- Ensure affordable and accessible housing options suited to elderly needs.
- Promote affordable transport services adapted to mobility limitations.
- Develop prevention and complaint mechanisms to address violence against older persons, whether at home, in care institutions, or in public spaces, ensuring their effective protection and access to justice.



33. Rights of Migrants, Asylum-Seekers, Internally Displaced People and Refugees

The rights of migrants, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, and refugees ensure that all people — regardless of nationality, migration status, or origin — can live with dignity, safety, and with equal access to essential services such as housing, healthcare, education, and employment. These rights are inseparable from the principles of human solidarity and shared responsibility that sustain democratic cities. They protect against discrimination, exclusion, and exploitation, and ensure that every person — whether newly arrived or long established — can contribute, belong, and thrive.

Local and regional governments have a duty in transforming cities into inclusive spaces of hospitality, coexistence, and justice, where migrants, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, and refugees receive a dignified welcome that respects human rights and full access to all public services, and where reception policies go beyond emergency responses and become instruments for social inclusion and equality.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Coordinate with national institutions and international partners to develop human rights-based responses to climate-induced or forced migration and displacement.
- Foster solidarity initiatives between inhabitants, migrant associations, and host communities to promote social cohesion, mutual understanding, and shared belonging.
- Provide accessible, multilingual information on rights, available public services, and legal protections for migrants, asylum-seekers, Internally Displaced People and refugees.
- Establish municipal welcoming centers that offer legal assistance, language courses, mental health services, and orientation programs.
- Systematically consult and engage migrant communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and services that affect them.
- Promote the active participation of migrants in local advisory councils, participatory budgeting, and other decision-making platforms.
- Support labor market integration through targeted employment programs, vocational training, and recognition of foreign diplomas and professional qualifications.
- Ensure access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing by adopting inclusive housing policies that prevent segregation, overcrowding, and discrimination.
- Ensure access to local public services, such as libraries, without undue barriers.



34. Rights of Ethnic Diversities and Freedom from Racism

The rights of ethnic diversities affirm that every individual, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or racial background, has the right to live free from discrimination, exclusion, and racial violence. This includes their right to preserve their cultural identity and traditions; to exercise their autonomy and self-determination; to access land and resources; to participate; and to have intercultural education, health care, and justice.

Local and regional governments have a critical duty to uphold these rights by adopting an antiracist approach to governance — actively confronting structural racism, advancing racial justice and equity, and transforming public institutions to ensure they are inclusive, representative, and accountable.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Protect people from all forms of racism and promote racial equity, fostering equal opportunities and guaranteeing equal treatment.
- Support cultural events that celebrate ethnic diversity and intercultural exchanges.
- Implement targeted employment (including municipal staff quotas) and housing inclusion initiatives for marginalized ethnic groups.
- Support access to financial services for ethnic diversities through tailored initiatives.
- Ensure meaningful representation of ethnic diversities in decision-making bodies and participatory governance processes.
- Establish independent oversight mechanisms and complaint mechanisms to monitor and address racial profiling, discriminatory policing, and institutional bias



35. Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The rights of Indigenous Peoples recognize their unique cultural identities, traditional knowledge, and inherent connection to ancestral lands and territories. They also encompass their cultural rights, including the protection of languages, spiritual practices, and the transmission of cultural traditions across generations. These rights affirm the importance of respecting Indigenous self-determination, protecting cultural heritage, and ensuring equitable access to resources and services without discrimination.

Local and regional governments have a vital obligation in upholding these rights within urban and territorial governance. By recognizing Indigenous Peoples as rights-holders and partners, municipalities can foster reconciliation, support the revitalization of cultural expressions and traditional knowledge, promote intercultural dialogue, and respect memory.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Ensure legal recognition and protection of Indigenous populations' lands and territory, safeguarding against displacement, land grabbing, and urban development pressures.
- Promote the revitalization and protection of Indigenous languages and knowledge through educational programs, language courses, library programming, or multilingual public services.
- Ensure the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in all planning, land-use, and environmental decision-making processes, particularly when ancestral or culturally significant territories are concerned.
- Integrate Indigenous ecological practices and traditional land stewardship into municipal climate action, biodiversity, and just ecological transition strategies.
- Support the creation and maintenance of Indigenous cultural spaces, such as community centers, museums, libraries, and cultural heritage sites.
- Revisit and transform existing cultural spaces to ensure they reflect the perspectives and narratives of Indigenous populations, through processes that guarantee the participation and representation of all communities.

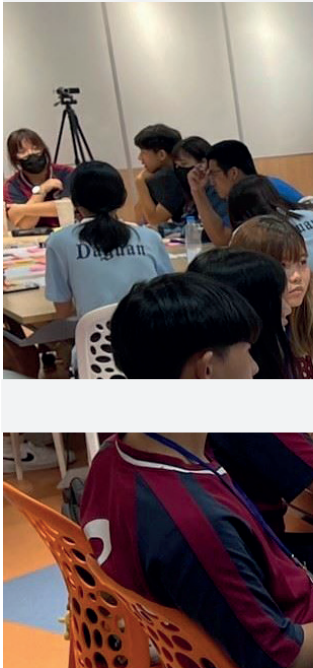
36. Rights of Gender and Sexual Diversity

Every person – regardless of their gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation – has the right to privacy and to live free from physical and institutional violence, discrimination, and exclusion.

Local and regional governments have a crucial role in advancing LGBTIQ+ people’s rights by supporting their participation in local public life, enacting and enforcing anti-discrimination norms, providing inclusive public services, and creating safe public spaces.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Recognize and protect LGBTIQ+ peoples of all forms of violence and discrimination.
- Train public officials, educators, police, and healthcare providers on LGBTIQ+ people’s rights, anti-discrimination standards, and inclusive service provision.
- Provide safe shelters, legal aid, and crisis support services for victims of hate crimes and gender-based violence.
- Promote and support LGBTIQ+ people’s cultural events and visibility campaigns in collaboration with CSO and LGBTIQ+ movements.
- Ensure access to inclusive and affirming health services, including mental health support and sexual and reproductive healthcare tailored to LGBTIQ+ people’s needs.
- Collect and publish disaggregated data on discrimination and hate crimes, ensuring privacy protections, to inform evidence-based policymaking and accountability.



37. Rights of All Persons with Disabilities

All persons with disabilities have the right to live with dignity, make decisions about their own lives, and exercise their autonomy on an equal basis with others.

Actively promoting the rights of all persons with disabilities to live independently and be a part of the community includes enabling the physical, digital, and social environment to ensure that all individuals, regardless of physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities, have equitable access to opportunities, services, infrastructures, and can meaningfully and autonomously participate in all aspects of urban life.

Local and regional governments have a fundamental obligation to ensure accessibility in all public infrastructure, transportation, housing, education, health systems, employment, and participatory mechanisms.

Recommendations for human rights-based action

- Implement comprehensive universal design and full physical and digital accessibility standards in public buildings or services and transit infrastructure, including sidewalks, metro stations, and bus stops (elevators, ramps, tactile paving, etc.), as well as point-to-point transportation.
- Ensure that all urban services (health, education, justice, culture, recreation) provide the necessary reasonable accommodations, assistive technologies, and trained staff.
- Adopt and implement inclusive procurement policies to promote equitable employment and education, and guarantee reasonable accommodation in workplace and educational facilities.
- Ensure the rights to information, including information and communications technologies (ICTs), education, and culture, by promoting accessible libraries, websites, mobile technologies, and other community and cultural infrastructures.
- Develop public awareness campaigns and accessible town hall meetings to combat stigma and discrimination of persons with disabilities in the community.
- Develop prevention and complaint mechanisms to combat violence and discrimination against persons with disabilities.
- Regularly generate locally disaggregated data by gender, age, and disability – including through the Washington Group Questions – in local censuses.
- Establish public mechanisms to track progress with the community on the implementation of accessibility measures and identify areas for improvement, working towards achieving universal design.

Local and regional governments as duty and rights-bearing actors

Right to Financing and Autonomy

Right to Territorial Diplomacy

Right to International Solidarity

Right to International Climate Justice



Cities are often the first responders and long-term guarantors of rights, yet they frequently operate without adequate autonomy, resources, or voice in global decision-making. As duty-bearers, local and regional governments have the legitimate authority and obligation to act in defense of human rights, but the current financial architecture is failing to respond to local realities. Without autonomy, resources, and the right to act and be listened to, human rights commitments risk remaining declaratory rather than effective.

Right to Financing and Autonomy

Cities have the right to adequate resources, fiscal capacity, and decision-making autonomy to fulfill their human rights obligations. This includes regulatory authority, predictable and sufficient financing, and the ability to design and implement policies tailored to local realities and needs. Redistributing power at the national level to ensure political autonomy and access to sustainable local finance is therefore not a concession to cities, but a non-negotiable prerequisite for enabling them to fulfill the human rights obligations they already carry.

Cities commit to:

- Managing public resources responsibly by strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring that public spending prioritizes social justice, care, climate action, and the common good.
- Strengthening transparency, accountability, and participatory mechanisms at the local level to reinforce democratic trust and public oversight.
- Applying human rights-based budgeting approaches to ensure that public resources advance equality, inclusion, and the realization of rights.

Cities call for:

- Strengthened political, administrative, fiscal, and regulatory autonomy of local and regional governments, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, in areas central to human rights, including housing, land use, public service provision, culture, and climate action.
- Stable, sufficient, and equitable fiscal transfers and revenue-raising powers for local and regional governments.
- Financing schemes and designs that are respondent to the services' needs, and not the other way around.
- Renewed and diversified financing mechanisms and tools adapted to the realities and scale of cities.
- Recognition, expanding and strengthening of the role of subnational development banks in supporting inclusive and sustainable urban development as a pillar of a new, decentralized, and democratic financial ecosystem.
- Strengthened direct access to international funding mechanisms, including subnational development aid or multilateral development banks.
- Long-term financing models that prioritize structural transformation over short-term, project-based solutions.

Right to Territorial Diplomacy

Local and regional governments are already playing a central role in shaping global norms, sharing solutions, and advancing human rights through networks, partnerships, and collective action, but they also need political recognition. Their right to speak, cooperate, and act transnationally must be recognized. This includes the capacity to engage in international dialogue, city-to-city cooperation, advocacy, and diplomacy beyond the nation-state, within a renewed and effective multilateral system, particularly to address global challenges with direct local human rights impacts.

Cities commit to:

- Engaging with — or continue engaging in — United Nations mechanisms, including the OHCHR and the relevant monitoring and reporting frameworks in place.
- Facilitating cross-border knowledge exchange, mutual learning, and solidarity mechanisms among cities at the regional and international levels, in particular around peace-building, human rights, migration, climate action, and social inclusion.
- Ensuring that local multilateralism strengthens, rather than replaces, democratic accountability and transparency at the local level.

Cities call for:

- A renewed multilateral system, inclusive of local and regional governments as political actors and partners.
- Institutionalized channels for the participation of local and regional governments in United Nations decision-making and relevant high-level forums.
- Recognition and protection of cities’ legal and political capacity to engage in international cooperation and human rights advocacy.
- Recognition and support for the municipalist movement and global networks — such as UCLG — as legitimate collective voices of local and regional governments.

Right to International Solidarity

Human rights are an international moral standard and an aspiration that connects several local movements, giving them a collective voice. International solidarity and decentralized development cooperation enable cities to learn from one another, pool resources, and respond collectively to shared challenges, especially where national governments fail to uphold human rights. Local and regional governments are both recipients and providers of solidarity, contributing knowledge, care, innovation, and political leadership across borders.

Cities commit to:

- Strengthening and expanding city-to-city solidarity networks, including the Human Rights Cities movement.
- Aligning public procurement policies with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as the mandate of the Human Rights Council, taking measures to avoid any institutional, commercial, or financial links with business entities that violate human rights.
- Protecting and supporting local human rights defenders, including elected officials, public servants, and civil society actors operating at the local level.
- Promoting solidarity-based partnerships grounded in equality, reciprocity, mutual respect, and long-term commitment.

Cities call for:

- Recognition of cities as legitimate actors within international development and human rights cooperation frameworks.
- Direct support for cities engaged in human rights, peace-building, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.



Right to International Climate Justice

Cities must commit to ambitious climate action, including mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building, while ensuring a just transition that leaves no one behind. The principle of climate justice requires that the burdens of the climate crisis not fall disproportionately on those who contributed least to it, while also recognizing extraterritorial responsibilities at all levels of governance. Climate justice therefore demands global accountability for historical emissions, including Loss and Damage frameworks that recognize the territorial harm suffered by frontline communities, and that local and regional governments are accountable for the global impacts of their policies.

Cities commit to:

- Treating climate change as an intersectoral issue, recognizing and addressing the unequal impacts of climate change on informal settlements, low-income communities, and marginalized groups.
- Integrating human rights, equity, and gender perspectives into all urban climate policies, plans, and actions.
- Recognizing that their human rights obligations extend beyond their borders, and actively consider the global impacts of local policies, investments, and supply chains.
- Aligning public procurement, investment strategies, and intergovernmental cooperation with climate justice objectives, ensuring that public resources drive low-carbon, sustainable, and socially equitable outcomes consistent with a human rights-based approach.

Cities call for:

- Financial and technical solidarity with cities and regions – particularly in the Global South – that are already facing irreversible climate impacts such as sea-level rise, drought, and displacement.
- Direct access for cities to international climate finance, including funding for mitigation, adaptation, and Loss and Damage mechanisms.
- Formal inclusion of cities and local and regional governments in global and national climate decision-making spaces, including the Convention of the Parties (COP) processes, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and related international frameworks or governance bodies.
- Global accountability for historical emissions and environmental harm.
- Stronger integration of support for Global South cities within climate and development cooperation frameworks, particularly those experiencing displacement, extreme weather, and irreversible ecological loss.
- Sustained support for capacity-building, data access, and technology transfer to enable effective, locally led climate action.



Final Provisions

Adoption and Application of the Charter-Agenda in Each City

The Charter-Agenda is an international framework for implementing human rights at the local level, guiding governance to ensure the protection and promotion of rights. Each cluster of rights provides practical entry points for a rights-based approach to diagnosis, decision-making, planning, action, and monitoring.

The **Guidance Framework for Creating Human Rights City (UCLG & OHCHR, 2025)** serves as the backbone of this approach. It offers a structured methodology for integrating human rights into local governance — from rights-based budgeting to establishing human rights structures within city administrations or providing capacity-building on human rights standards. Aligning with this framework enables local and regional governments to systematically integrate human rights, monitor progress, and ensure accountability across policies and services.

In order to address and implement the recommendations provided in this Charter, and in dialogue with the Guidance Framework, local and regional governments are encouraged to ask and answer a set of essential questions:

- Legal obligation:** What must be guaranteed — not negotiated — as part of our mandate?
- Responsibility and accountability:** Who are the actors or institutions responsible for ensuring the delivery of each right? Through which services, programs, or policies are they expected to fulfill these obligations? Are there effective mechanisms in place to hold them accountable, including oversight of private actors?
- Situational analysis:** Whose rights are covered by current programs and services? Who is being left behind? Are human rights principles, such as non-discrimination and equity, being applied?
- Budgets and resources:** Are public resources and budgets being allocated through a human rights-based approach?
- For action:** What are our challenges in realizing these rights, and how are we currently addressing them?
- Monitoring and evaluation:** Are we collecting disaggregated data to track progress? How are we measuring the quality and level of rights provision? Are self-assessment tools applied systematically and aligned with national indicators?
- Participation and engagement:** Who should be consulted and engaged in planning and implementing specific programs?

The New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City can become effective in each city following a local consultation process. Local and regional governments are encouraged to define and adapt an action plan that includes concrete implementation measures, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

This New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City has been adopted by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), following a wide and global participatory process, **on 25 June 2026, during the UCLG Congress in Tangier.**



United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG

Carrer Avinyó, 15 - 08002 Barcelona

www.uclg.org

Cordination of the edition

UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

All rights reserved

Copyright © 2026 UCLG



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of UCLG and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Photo credits

UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights and International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (OIDP)

All photos in this publication are copyright of UCLG

With the financial support of:





**Human
Rights**



**in The
City**



UCLG

United Cities
and Local Governments



UCLG

Committee

Social Inclusion
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights