

**Official Event  
Round Table**

**Eunpyeonggu,  
for poverty eradication and equal society!**

**Kim Mikyung  
[head, Eunpyeong-gu]**

○ Hello, everyone. I am Kim Mikyung.

○ Thank you for having me for the 13th World Human Rights Cities Forum.

It is my great pleasure to have this opportunity to talk under the theme of 'Human Rights Cities Responding to Poverty and Inequalities' along with Mayor of Gwangju, Kang Gi-jung, Mayor Sumastro, Deputy Mayor Vicki Felthaus, Deputy Mayor Karolina Zdrodowska, Director Morten Kjaerum, and Chairperson Kim Joongseop.

○ Worsening poverty and inequalities weigh heavily on my heart as I am requested to make a presentation here today. The UN established the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 30 years ago in order to address poverty and inequality, however, the situation has ever been worsening.

○ According to the Sustainable Development Report 2022 published by the UN, around 93 million people newly came to live in extreme poverty in 2020 when the covid-19 pandemic spread around the world.

On the other hand, however, even amid the adversity, the assets of the world's top 10 rich reportedly doubled during the same period.

○ There is a saying that goes "adversities are overcome by hope". Hope needs to work as the last resort for those driven to the brink of their hopeless life. However, I ask myself whether our life does work as such.

○ Therefore, today, I would like to share the project implemented by Eunpyeonggu in efforts to cut off the vicious cycle of poverty and inequality. I hope our Eunpyeonggu's projects could provide good references for you who are taking your precious time in a bid to realize poverty eradication and fulfil the value of equality.

○ Eunpyeonggu, located in the northwestern of Seoul, has the most children's homes among other 25 districts in Seoul. Therefore, the region has the highest proportion of the youth in preparation for their self-reliant lives, and many of them are highly likely to be exposed to unequal reality after being discharged from

institutions.

○ According to the ‘survey on the current status and needs of children with expired protection by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs under the Office for the Government Policy Coordination’, among 3,104 youths preparing for an independent life, 1,552 or 50% of them reportedly have thought about suicide at least once because of economic and other issues. That figure is 3 times higher than other youth around the same age scope. The issue of human rights of those in preparing for self-reliance is much worse than we could imagine.

○ Thus, Eunpyeonggu has operated the following two projects for the first time in Korea in order to cope with inequality that the youth preparing the independent lives facing in their daily life.

○ The first project is the ‘Eunpyeong Center for the Youth Preparing for Independence’ which aims at helping the youth preparing for independent life lay a foundation for their self-reliance and actively draw the picture of their future plan. It has offered a customized and comprehensive program for them by providing items needed for emergency and foods, and operating vocational programs and economic self-reliance program.

○ As a result, around 20 times of emergency supports have been provided from last year until now. Also, as many as 150 youth in preparing self-reliance have signed up for the private healthcare insurance, which means that we were able to cover even those in blind spots.

○ Second, we have run ‘Eunpyeong Self-reliance Housing’. We thought that once the youth preparing for the self-reliant life come to get prepared enough, then, they need to be given a chance to experience a true independent life.

○ Based on that idea, we have run 4 Self-reliance Housings based on the MOU signed up with LH. Under the initiative, Eunpyeonggu has paid downpayments and

rental fees to ease the financial burden of the youth preparing for the independent life. Relevant officials and those in charge of monitoring children's houses visit the housings every once or twice a month to help them achieve a complete independence.

○ Whenever a tragedy derived from poverty and inequality is reported, it prompts us to reaffirm administrative responsibilities on a devastating reality that the underprivileged have to go through. With empathizing the reality, the district has implemented various customized support initiatives.

○ First of all, we have operated a dedicated support program for the vulnerable. Protection of the right to health of the vulnerable is one of the top priorities of the government. The Constitution of Korea determines the right to health and stipulates the state obligation on the people's right to health.

○ The reality ahead of us, however, is not that easy. For instance, heart-wrenching tragedies have kept occurring and laid bare the reality of those left in the blind spot. (cf. a mother and two daughters committed suicide after going through all financial difficulties). Thus, local governments have to come up with specified policies for them and stretch out to the blind spots where the government cannot cover.

○ With this regard, the Eunpyeonggu has carried out 'Adding Healthcare to Caring' project that provides a comprehensive healthcare service for free to households with low-income and beneficiaries of National Basic Livelihood.

○ The initiative is composed of 4 phases including health consultation and customized comprehensive care service for those in need of help.

○ In details, the first phase is 'visiting health consultation' that provides healthcare consultation after checking up health condition and status of the subject. In the second phase, 'preventive care service' is provided to help beneficiaries prevent and manage chronic diseases. During the third phase, 'care SOS Center in association with customized healthcare service' is implemented to provide beneficiaries with

guides on drug consumption, customized meal service, and program of improving living condition. Lastly, for the fourth phase, 'satisfaction and evaluation survey' is conducted in order to offer a better caring service.

- Especially, Seoul City benchmarked the 'Adding Healthcare to Caring' initiative that Eunpyeonggu launched first and to implement it under a new name of 'Care SOS Healthcare Welfare Service'.

- Next initiative is customized care service by group.

- The 'Adding Healthcare to Caring' mentioned earlier is a selective system, now, let me introduce universal caring initiatives. Of course, caring is the rights that all the public is entitled to. The obligation of the state and local governments to enhance social welfare prescribed in the Article 34 and 13 of the Korean Constitution is not limited only to the vulnerable.

- In this regard, Eunpyeonggu attempted to address inequalities experienced by households with the pregnant and infant during the process of visiting hospitals. Thus, the district has developed and implemented 'iMom Taxi', dedicated taxies for them for the first time across the nation

- Second, aside from policies focusing on multi-person households, we have conducted specialized projects for single-person households to meet various demands to catch up with a growing number of them. They include 'EunbitSOLbab(foods), EunbitSOLcare(costs for patient caring), and EunbitSOLlife(supporting adaptation after relocation). Under the initiatives, we have run a support center for single-person households to provide educational programs on confectionary making, barista, organizing and storage specialist, and others. In so doing, we are providing customized programs and consultations and social network building services as well.

- Third, Eunpyeonggu also has implemented a training program on using kiosk and

Baekse(100 years old) Call in hopes to address inequalities in the elderly's accessibility as the world has been rapidly changing. Especially, the Baekse Call service is to help the elderly at the age of 65 or older easily call a taxi with just one phone call.

○ The service is the project initiated by Eunpyeonggu and now benchmarked by many other districts in Seoul.

○ I presented all about the customized care support initiatives implemented by our district. I am happy that we have been recognized with the effectiveness of our district's model that we developed with purpose of coping with poverty and inequalities. At the same time, we feel a grave responsibility as a leading district, too.

○ Furthermore, we will not spare any effort in leading innovation to make sure our model to be the nation's best caring support initiative beyond the city of Seoul.

○ Since the adoption of the SDGs by the UN in 2015, the concept of 'sustainability' has garnered attention from all over the globe.

○ Korea, even Eunpyeonggu, as a human rights friendly area, is not an exception in this effort. Eunpyeonggu has become the 5th district to legislate 'Seoul Eunpyeonggu Sustainable Development Framework Ordinance', and, as such, our district is highly interested in addressing poverty and inequalities.

○ Eunpyeonggu operates various educational programs to alleviate poverty and inequalities in accordance with the Article 22 of the ordinance which stipulates the obligation to establish sustainable development education programs. An education program on responding to climate crisis and a forum held under the theme of the protection of human rights of the elderly exposed to hatred, ignorance, and poverty are representative cases.

○ Accordingly, we hosted 'ESD International Forum' in June so that countries

around the world could introduce and share practical cases on a sustainable development.

○ During the forum, officials from Germany, France, Ireland, and Italy shared the trends and issues related to sustainable development education, and ‘ESD Eunpyeong Declaration’ containing the role and direction of Eunpyeonggu was proclaimed. In so doing, we were able to set a cornerstone in education sector in efforts to eradicate poverty and inequalities.

□ Closing

○ Ladies and gentlemen,

As preparing today’s presentation, I looked back on the time that we went through for enhancing human rights of our residents. There is something that I released throughout the process. If we keep working on, then, we could bring a great change that could not be easily wavered.

So, there is one thing that I would like to ask for. Ladies and gentlemen, let us work hard together toward world human rights cities. Let us move forward together. Also, I hope all of you here today join us our efforts.

○ Thank you very much.