

Mayor's letter of commitment (Mayor Kang Inkyu, Naju City)

Dear Officials of WHO GNAFCC,

Please accept my sincere gratitude and respect for your organization which is leading the charge in fostering age-friendly cities and supporting cities around the world that are facing the difficulties and challenges of addressing the aging phenomenon.

As Mayor of approximately 120,000 citizens of Naju City, I deeply appreciate this opportunity to apply for the WHO GNAFCC in compliance with the WHO's recommendations for age-friendly city project.

Korea is experiencing rapid ultra-aging. In Korea, ultra-aging has progressed at an alarmingly high rate, especially in small-to-medium-sized cities. Naju City, a complex city consisting of a mixture of urban and rural areas, is considered one of the most rapidly aging cities in the nation. The reason for this can be summed up in two factors; we are located near a metropolitan city and we are not equipped with a stable base for employment.

As a result, the city is rapidly declining in development, and residential quality is deteriorating, causing various inconveniences and safety problems for the elderly who desire to live out their lives peacefully. In the past, Naju City failed to address these issues and only invested resources in basic welfare support, including caregiving services for physical well-being mainly for the vulnerable elderly who were not well-prepared for old age. Past policies for the elderly were misguided due to limited budget, lack of a proper mindset for fostering an age-friendly city, and insufficient specific implementation experience.

Under these circumstances we are determined to participate as an age-friendly city, being highly encouraged by the support of your Age-friendly City initiatives and by witnessing the inspiring outcomes of the ten already certified age-friendly cities in Korea. We are strongly convinced that Naju City, a small-to-medium-sized, complex city with a mixture of urban and rural areas, will be able to make the leap to become a uniquely developed city, if we are provided with a diversity of practical support from your

organization and the network of advanced cities around the world.

Dear WHO GNAFCC Officials,

I sincerely request that you allow Naju City to participate in your organization's network and to be allowed to share information, offers, and success stories within your network along with other member cities. We give our word that we will build up an exemplary age-friendly Naju City in cooperation with administrative experts, professionals in the private sector, and our elderly citizens. Also, we promise that we will contribute to worldwide age-friendly city fostering projects. We hope your organization and age-friendly cities around the world will achieve even greater success stories. Once again, we ask for your support and for an opportunity to be a part of this meaningful program.