



December 23, 2020

WHO GNAFCC

To whom it may concern,

This is Jang-Hyun Sung, the district mayor of Yongsan-Gu, where the past and the future coexist. I would like to convey my deepest respect and support for you and the WHO GNAFCC for your commitment to the improvements of public health and welfare of the aged.

Yongsan-Gu is a district in the very center of Seoul, the capital city of the Republic of Korea. Just as the nature of a city with a dense population, everything in Yongsan-Gu changes very quickly. It has always had a high potential for developments and improvements due to its rapid changes. We, including all the citizens and members of the office, have tried hard to make a place that shows gratitude to the elder, who have put their time and effort into building and developing the city to this point. We also would make sure they are included and able to have the benefits from the city.

Yongsan-Gu district currently has a total population of about 230,000 and more than 17% is the elderly, who are at the age of 65 or older. It is already an “aged society,” and it is predicted to be a “super-aged society” by the year 2025. Since the elderly citizens account for a large portion of the population, it is important to have their opinions reflected in policies and physical environment prepared to compensate for the inconveniences caused by the physical and economic changes as they age.

Yongsan-Gu regulated the municipal ordinance in order to construct the “age-friendly city.” Through this regulation, the district made it mandatory to establish, implement, and evaluate the action plan for creating an elderly-friendly community every year. It also secured the promotion of policies to support the elder’s welfare and protect their rights.

We have identified the issue and had SWOT analysis based on surveys targeted at the elderly in the district, FGI (Focus Group Interview) of related institution employees, and evaluation results on the environmental conditions. Under the catchphrase of “The city you want to live in, the best Yongsan everyone makes together” the three main objectives were set as “healthy and vibrant post-retirement,” “safe environment for the elderly,” and “the inclusive local community.” We also have divided the project into five areas, which are “the healthy life of the elderly,” “pleasant and convenient physical environment,” “safe traffic environment and transportation” “work-life-balanced life,” and “consideration and respect through empathy.” We also have selected 45 initiative assignments to be carried out in three years.

The health and care support projects would include not only the everyday health management such as individual work-out and diet but also condition management through using ICT (Information and Communication Technology), mental health support, housekeeping, nursing, and care/support for dementia to help the elderly to overcome the fear of changes due to the aging.

We also have come up with plans to provide environmental improvements such as home improvement using IoT (Internet of Things) technologies, installation of supports and facilities considering the living characteristics of the elderly, improvements of sidewalk condition, policies to provide safe public transportation for the elderly.

We have selected projects to expand opportunities that encourage the elderly's social participation to integrate generations together. The projects include a festival for the elderly citizens, the vitalization of a district newsletter specifically targeting them, expansion of education and working spaces, and a mentoring program between the elderly and college students.

A committee with newsletter experts, related field employees, district council members, and representatives for the elderly has been established. They would advise and evaluate in planning projects and execution of the projects every year. Also, a monitoring team with the elderly would be formed to collect opinions from the beneficiaries.

Aging is unavoidable for everyone. All the members of the community, even those who are in different age groups would eventually benefit from the "age-friendly society." Our goal is to make an "Age-friendly society" where the elders are able to comfortably enjoy their old ages in the place which they put their efforts and passion in their youth. In order to do so, all generations must work together.

Yongsan-Gu sincerely hopes to be a model of an "Age-friendly society," and be a member of the global network that can help to solve the issues from an aging society that is shared throughout the globe.

Sincerely,

Jang-Hyun Sung
District Mayor of Yongsan-Gu

