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Department of Ageing and Life-Course
World Health Organization

Dear director of the WHO GNAFCC

First of all, I would like to thank all officials of the WHO GNAFCC who are working hard to create age-friendly cities.

In recent years, Dong-gu has experienced rapid aging. The elderly population, which accounted for 17.7% of the total population in 2016, increased to 20.1% in 2018, entering the post-aged society by UN standard, and soared to 23.1% in 2020. The aging of Dong-gu is expected to accelerate further in the future due to the baby boomers becoming senior citizens and the outflow of production population due to the prolonged urban development projects.

Therefore, we realized that we need a completely new senior citizen policy. We are faced with the need to establish systematic, long-term and continuous policies across various fields, such as economy, society, education, and culture, not just a list of projects that consider the elderly as beneficiaries. In addition, in recognition that the global COVID pandemic won't allow us to keep the existing

social system, we are also accelerating the preparation for the post-COVID era.

I think this concern is in line with the Global Network project of age-friendly cities that the WHO is promoting. Now is the time to create a good urban environment where all residents of all generations, including the elderly, can live a healthy life physically, emotionally, and socially.

To prepare for this, we have been carrying out procedures for joining the Global Network since 2020. We have established a plan to prepare for membership, secured a budget, and provided for legal grounds to support the project.

Furthermore, we conducted an age friendliness survey of the users of our administrative welfare center and district office, and established a 3-year plan to create an age-friendly city based on this. Following the guidelines provided by the WHO, we have set up 3 major strategies, which are ▲guaranteeing a warm and healthy life after retirement, ▲building a community together and ▲creating an urban environment where people want to stay for a long time, and selected 31 implementation tasks in 8 action areas. We will make utmost efforts to carry out the 31 implementation tasks in a systematic manner through cooperation between departments to achieve the best results.

In the future, we will form an age-friendly city creation committee to collect opinions from experts. In addition, we are preparing for the project of operating a senior citizens' policy monitoring group by securing a budget in order to increase voluntary policy participation of senior citizens and to identify matters for improvement.

Dong-gu has some benefits as an old city center in that it has a history and a complete urban infrastructure. I believe that Dong-gu will be a better city to live in if the requirements for creating an age-friendly city are met additionally. A city that respects the past, enjoys the present, and prepares for the future. A city where modern apartments and friendly alleys coexist. A city where people in their 20s and 80s live together in harmony. Dong-gu is ready to make this happen with the WHO. I hope that the WHO will acknowledge our commitment and look forward to the day when we can share and cooperate with the international community.

Best Regards,

허인환

In-hwan Heo

Mayor of Dong-gu, Incheon Metropolitan City