

Applying for WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

April 22, 2025

Department of Ageing and Life-Course (ALC) World Health Organization Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Director of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities,

I am Kim Kyung -il, the Mayor of Paju City in the Republic of Korea . It is a great honor to express our intent to join the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC). This letter highlights our commitment to creating an age-friendly environment for all residents, especially our senior citizens.

Paju City is located in the northwest of Gyeonggi Province, adjacent to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). With a harmonious blend of natural landscapes and urban development, Paju is home to approximately 514,717 residents. As of February 2025, 16.5% of our population, or 84,810 residents, are aged 65 or older, making it imperative to address the needs of our aging society proactively.

Our city strives to become a community where all generations can coexist happily and lead fulfilling lives. In line with this vision, we have established comprehensive strategies to enhance the quality of life for our senior citizens. These initiatives align closely with the WHO's framework for age-friendly cities, focusing on the eight domains of urban life.

To further this goal, Paju City has developed a roadmap for age-friendly development, anchored by three core policy objectives:

1. Ensuring a safe and pleasant environment for all residents.
2. Promoting vibrant and healthy aging for our senior citizens.
3. Fostering inclusivity and communication across all generations.

In 2024, Paju City conducted a thorough assessment of our age-friendliness and formulated a three-year Action Plan, which includes specific goals and actionable strategies in the following eight domains:

1. Expanding safe and pleasant urban environments.
2. Establishing an all-care network for secure housing environments.
3. Creating universal design infrastructure for transportation accessibility.
4. Realizing wellness through healthy community care systems.
5. Ensuring vibrant and stable employment opportunities for older adults.
6. Building an inclusive and socially integrated city.
7. Promoting active and healthy living environments.
8. Enhancing information accessibility for an engaged and dynamic life.

Under the slogan “ Citizen-Centered, Greater Paju,” Paju City has implemented the 'Ttock Bus' to improve transportation accessibility for residents in vulnerable areas, including transportation-disadvantaged groups. In addition, we have worked to enhance the quality of life for our senior citizens by creating job opportunities tailored to the elderly, helping them lead more active and engaged lives.

By joining the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, Paju City seeks to collaborate with global members to exchange best practices and innovate sustainable solutions to aging-related challenges. We are committed to contributing to the network’ s mission and to fostering a world where aging is embraced as an opportunity for growth and development.

Thank you for considering Paju City’ s application. We look forward to your favorable review and to building a strong partnership with the WHO GNAFCC. Together, we can make meaningful strides toward creating a more inclusive and age-friendly future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Kyung-il', followed by a long horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Kim Kyung-il,
Mayor of Paju City Republic of Korea