

Declaration of Helsinki

Mayors of the World for a Global Cities Dialogue on the Information Society

The cities signatories to this declaration believe that the development of the Information Society should be for the benefit of all their citizens, communities, and peoples of the world, regardless of race, social position, creed, gender or age. They commit themselves to work tirelessly to realise this promise of equal opportunities and access, and invite all major cities across the five continents to join in this worthy enterprise through the Global Cities Dialogue.

The signatory cities subscribe to the principles:

- that cities are essential to the process of building a fair Information Society because they are the geographical, political, socio-economic and cultural entities where millions live, work and directly exercise their rights as citizens and consumers;
- that the effective creation and implementation of Information Society Technologies in our diverse societies has the potential to improve:
 - the quality of life and work of individuals,
 - the employment opportunities
 - the quality and cost-effectiveness of processes and services
 - the practice of government and democracy at all levels
 - the prospects of the social economy and sustainable development
- that there is the need for conscious steps to improve social cohesion and help avoid the division between information-rich and information-poor citizens and communities both inside societies and between societies;

- that the convergence and gradual globalisation of information society technologies and services need new forms of governance and co-operation;
- that the early phases of development of the Information Society imply a learning process in which the sharing of experiences, results and lessons among cities will be most beneficial;
- that the Global Cities Dialogue constitutes a most valuable initiative to advance the Information Society across the globe, helping to reduce the gap between information-rich and information-poor within and between cities;
- that the Global Cities Dialogue provides an innovative mechanism for an informed interaction between cities and the private sector at local and global levels.

On this basis the signatory cities commit themselves to work together:

- to ensure the application of Information Society Technologies in cities with a view to improving the quality of life and work of individuals, the quality and cost-effectiveness of processes and services, and the effective progress towards sustainable development;
- to nurture trust and confidence in the development of the Information Society, respecting the laws, traditions, languages and culture of cities and countries; while nurturing democratic participation, freedom of speech and privacy in the practice of electronic government;
- to tackle the low technological literacy, poor public access and shortage of skilled people that in many cities and countries represent a major obstacle to an equal-opportunity Information Society;
- to encourage the sharing of experiences, results and lessons among cities in order to facilitate a local and global process of information-society learning and development;

- to define and implement a programme of action that will help build the Global Cities Dialogue into an exciting and fruitful initiative for the Information Society in the future;
- to work together with similar initiatives such as the Global Business Dialogue to identify and exploit synergies for the benefit of citizens, communities, cities and the private sector locally and globally.