**Windi Imam, Raoul Wallenberg Institute**

In the vast Asia-Pacific region, an alarming gap persists between intention and action. Despite the commitment at the national level, translating human rights principles into effective local policies has proven to be a complex endeavour. There are instances of limited awareness, inadequate technical expertise, and insufficient engagement with stakeholders – challenges which the previous speakers have mentioned in the beginning. These factors have hindered the integration of human rights into the fabric of local governance. The concept of human rights – or even the word itself – is often misunderstood. Therefore, leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an entry point has demonstrated effectiveness and increased accessibility.

Answering the question of how and what can academic institution do? the collaboration between RWI, the City of Gwangju, the United Cities and Local Government Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), and the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) exemplifies a concerted effort to bridge this gap. Through Blended Learning Courses (BLCs), we are empowering local governments and actors across the region with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively incorporate human rights in the context of SDGs.

The BLCs are more than just educational programs; they serve as bridges between local governments, CSOs, academics, and NHRIs, fostering an environment of shared learning and collaboration. They address capacity gaps, raise awareness, and provide practical resources, enabling local governments to transform principles into tangible actions – big/small – that resonate with their communities' unique needs and challenges.

As climate-related challenges intensify, we noted that local governments must develop the skills and knowledge to address environmental issues while safeguarding human rights. By integrating human rights into climate action, local governments can enhance their resilience and promote sustainable development. Learning from our engagement with local governments and actors in Asia, we also noted that there is a need for local governments to be capacitated on the interlinkages between human rights, climate change and its intersectionality with various rights issues, including poverty, gender inequality, and other discrimination factors, and how to put these considerations into action through rights-based climate adaptation plans.Top of Form

In closing, our recognition of the significant gap between intention and action in the expansive Asia-Pacific region calls for determined and concerted efforts. Fostering international/regional partnerships and collaboration to share experiences, expertise, and resources is one recommendation for this panel. Regional organizations, such as ASEAN, can play a role in facilitating such cooperation and influencing change at the local level in collaboration with various stakeholders.