Category: Obligation to Protect Rights of Expression and Association

Sub-Category: Protection of Environmental Human Rights Defenders

Name of Good Practice: **Front Line Defenders Identification Cards for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders**

Implementing Actors: Civil Society Organisation: Front Line Defenders (FLD)

Location: Global

Key Words: Advocacy, Environmental Human Rights Defenders, Network, Protection, Support

Description: Front Line Defenders (FLD) was founded in Dublin in 2001 with the aim of protecting human rights defenders at risk -- people who work non-violently for any or all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One important programme FLD has employed since 2005 is the use of identification (ID) cards to provide human rights defenders with an easy-to-use tool that they can carry to show that they are internationally recognized. The front of each card notes in bold and large font that the named cardholder is a human rights defender registered with FLD, an organization that has special consultative status with the United Nations. The back of each card describes the mission of FLD, lists the individuals on its Leadership Council (such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu), and provides contact information and emergency numbers. According to FLD, since 2005 it has issued 1500 ID cards. FLD sends the cards directly to human rights defenders by post or private courier, depending on the reliability of the postal system. In addition, FLD sometimes distributes ID cards at training workshops or when FLD meets with human rights defenders in person in the field or in its headquarters.

FLD regularly seeks feedback from human rights defenders on the effectiveness of using the ID cards, and human rights defenders have informed FLD of many practical uses for the ID cards. For example, human rights defenders have used the cards to pass check points and to generally make travel and transit easier; to introduce themselves to other human rights organizations or activists; to show police when they are arrested or to help release other defenders detained by the police; to provide to the police and military to allow them more time to conduct protest activities; to help with the collection of information in the field, including from government authorities and companies; and to present when having formal meetings with government officials.

Further Information: Information on the ID cards can be requested directly from FLD: <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/>; other tools and resources for human rights defenders can also be found on its website.