

Recommendations for Gender-Specific Implementation
of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders

Endorsed by:

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This draft document outlines concrete suggestions¹ for EU Missions (including embassies and consulates of EU member states and European Commission delegations) in implementing “Ensuring protection – the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders”² (EU Guidelines). It is specifically aimed to ensure due support and protection of women human rights defenders.

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) is a term referring to women who individually or with others act to promote and protect human rights; it also refers to any individual working specifically to promote women's rights. This sub-category of defenders has been singled out because women activists face risks particular to their gender committed by both state and non-state actors (including their families and communities), in particular when they confront and challenge cultural, religious or social norms about the role and status of women in their societies. Whether or not they work to ensure reproductive and sexual rights, the rights of lesbian gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals or people living with HIV/AIDS, their protection falls squarely within international legal obligations of all states to ensure the realisation of the fundamental human rights of all, including WHRDs.

Because of prescribed gender roles, their often marginalized social status, and at times the “controversial” nature of their work, WHRDs encounter additional risks and obstacles to those faced by their male counterparts. These risks include sexual assault and harassment, various forms of violence and the use of pejorative ideas about sexuality to discredit their individual reputations, their work, and their political agendas. Consequently, WHRDs are often the ones who require the utmost support and protection.

Our organisations specifically call for:

- The adoption of specific conclusions by the General Affairs External Relations Council (GAERC) taking note of the risks and obstacles faced by WHRDs in the exercise of their activities, emphasizing the urgency and necessity of enhancing their protection and stressing the importance of applying a gender perspective in addressing human rights defenders issues;
- The incorporation of gender-specific recommendations and implementation tools into the Handbook on the Implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (as drafted under the Dutch Presidency);

- The dissemination of gender-specific recommendations for the protection of WHRDs to all missions as soon as possible and their full implementation.
- The incorporation of the gender-specific recommendations in training for mission staff on HRDs to ensure specific focus on issues related to WHRDs.

1. Monitoring, reporting, assessment (Section IV, Article 8)

Pursuant to Section IV, Article 8 of the EU Guidelines, EU Heads of Mission (HoM) are requested to cover the situation of human rights defenders (HRDs) in periodic human rights reports. In monitoring the occurrence of any “threats or attacks against HRDs,” HoMs are requested to assess measures (legislative, judicial, administrative, etc.) taken by the State to protect against “violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action” that curtail the exercise of the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.³

1.1 Violence, threats, retaliation

- **Document gender-specific or gender-motivated threats, retaliation and violence**

Specific violations most commonly endured by WHRDs tend to be ignored. In fulfilling the monitoring and periodic reporting requirements to the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM), HoM should also use the guidelines for documenting human rights violations against WHRDs⁴. EU Missions should also devise documentation systems or sustained and systemic ways to record incidents of violence, retaliation and threats against WHRDs, particularly by non-state actors including armed groups, community and religious leaders, family and community members and other activists.

- **Accurately assess the severity of gender-driven harassment and threats**

When assessing the situation of HRDs, EU Missions must accord due and equal weight to all forms of violence and threats whether they occur in the public or private sphere. EU HoMs should endeavour to document overt public violence, threats and repression of women defenders, as well as the lesser documented, more subtle and insidious violations that take place in the private sphere. Intimidation and hostility against WHRDs aimed to discredit their work by, for example, vilifying them based on their actual or perceived sexual practises or their rejection of prescribed gender roles (also known as “sexuality baiting”) must be recognized seriously and redress instituted properly.

- **Incorporate the situation of WHRDs in periodic human rights reports**

In fulfilling the monitoring and periodic reporting requirements to the COHOM, HoM should include an assessment of the situation of WHRDs in a particular country drawing from the reports and recommendations of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders (both annual reports and country reports). It is also important to take into consideration communications on specific cases on WHRDs at risk addressed by the Special Representative to Governments. In many cases, annual and country reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences can also be a valuable resource on the violations and abuses against WHRDs.

- **Consult with WHRDs and women’s organisations when producing human rights reports**

The HoM should consult WHRDs and women’s non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their respective countries for additional or alternative information on the situation of WHRDs in a particular country.

1.2 *De facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination

- **Analyse state response to gender-based discriminatory laws and practices**

Assessing the generalised patterns of gender-based discrimination will enable a more accurate and nuanced evaluation of the legal and social obstacles that hamper women from pursuing human rights work. EU Missions should highlight the failures of states to enact measures to protect, promote and fulfil women's rights, including the rights of women to defend human rights, and .in particular, to ensure that WHRDs can conduct their activities without threats to their organisations and networks, whether they are legally or informally established.

- **Monitor equal participation of women in public and civil life**

EU Missions should report on discriminatory practices and laws which exclusively or disproportionately adversely impact on women and curtail their access to participation in public and civil life, especially as defenders of human rights. EU Missions should take particular note of the impact of prevailing attitudes that discredit and dismiss women as experts on certain issues - such as religion and security, thus exclude them from debates related to women's rights.

- **Document the absence of public platforms for pro-women's human rights views**

The gender-neutral interpretations of the freedom of expression fail to account for state and social pressure that silence women who wish to promote women's rights by challenging national, local, social, or religious customs or conventions. Moreover, state regulations that disallow the formation or deny or revoke registration of NGOs impact in particular on WHRDs who are already more likely to be excluded from formal public spaces. To counter the effective marginalisation of women's views from the public sphere, EU Missions could facilitate their access to public platforms and the full realisation of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

- **Document lack of access to form associations and organisations**

Women's lower socio-economic position and discriminatory legal or social practices deny women access to resources that can impinge on the exercise of their right to form human rights associations. Other laws or practices that require the approval of a male relative or a guardian for legal action or social sanction of a woman's activism likewise prevent women from informally organizing or formally establishing groups. EU Missions could highlight cases where women activists are barred to organise themselves or are unable to access resources to form associations and organisations.

- **Monitor impunity for attack against WHRDs**

In monitoring whether cases of violations against defenders are investigated, perpetrators brought to justice and victims compensated, EU Missions should account for unequal treatment of WHRDs who are subject to abuse. Perpetrators of violations against female – as opposed to male – human rights defenders enjoy greater impunity in countries with biased legal justice systems or discriminatory laws and practices or social attitudes that do not consider women as equal under the law or fail to take seriously violations against women. This situation is particularly prevalent when perpetrators are members of the WHRD's family or community and the state lacks or fails to enforce protective or remedial measures for such violence against women.

- **Account for intersectional obstacles and risks faced by WHRDs**

WHRDs are attacked for who they are in addition to what they do. When monitoring incidents against WHRDs and in assessing the level of risk and challenge to their work and person, the compound impact of various social factors should be considered. This is of particular concern when women's various identity factors are compounded by hostility towards the political work they do. For example, women who work to promote the land rights of their indigenous communities struggle against hostility based on their gender and ethnicity. Women active in trade unions or organisations for fair labour practices are

particularly marginalised in countries where the female workforce is least protected and most exploited. 1.3 Pressure and Other Arbitrary Action

- **Document incidents of pressure not only by State but also by non-State actors designed to silence women and discourage their activism**

In undertaking monitoring efforts pursuant to Section IV, Article 8, EU Missions should consider conducting field missions to highlight and verify little known or publicised violations against women defenders, in particular those operating in remote areas or who work on issues that challenge or are deemed to “transgress” social and religious conventions subjecting them to grave risk of violations by non-state actors. Such documentation can form the basis for EU Missions to call on states to investigate incidents of pressure, threats and abuse against WHRDs and to act to ensure redress for these violations and abuses, particularly by non-state actors.

- **Document donor funding policies that selectively mute women defenders working on certain rights**

EU Missions should assess and evaluate EU and other donor funding policies that undermine support for comprehensive programmes that promote sexuality and reproductive rights, including work on HIV/AIDS and work with sex workers and IV drug users. Reduced funding to these presumably controversial areas endangers not only the provision of services and advocacy around these issues, but also contributes to a social climate of impunity for abuse against WHRDs who engage in such work.

- **Document curtailment of the freedoms of expression and association that inhibit the advocacy for women’s rights**

EU Missions should also reflect in their documentation the rise in incidents of governments that are closing down borders, restricting movement, freedom of association and freedom of speech to stop human rights defenders from gathering together to advocate for human rights issues, such as civil society meetings and actions around WTO, IFIs, etc. Curtailing these freedoms also inhibit the work of WHRDs and the advocacy for women’s rights.

2. Support and protection of HRDs (Section IV, Article 10)

Section IV, Article 10 of the EU Guidelines outlines possible measures that may be undertaken by EU Missions on behalf of and in consultation with human rights defenders. Notably, EU statements should regularly cite and address violations against WHRDs and the political, legal, economic and social contexts enabling the persistence of such abuse.

2.1 Co-ordinating closely and sharing information on human rights defenders, including WHRDs

- **Form in-country working group of EU Missions staff working on human rights, gender, democracy, security and development policy**

These country working groups, addressing different thematic concerns, should meet and strategise regularly about the situation of human rights defenders, including that of WHRDs.

- **WHRD Focal Points in EU missions and delegations**

Designate contact persons or focal points within the EU Missions and delegations that are gender-sensitive and aware of the specificities of WHRDs to facilitate contact with WHRDs.

- **Involve WHRDs and members of international, regional and national NGOs**

WHRDs and those who work for and with WHRDs should be involved in regular information and strategy meetings about protection and support for women defenders. It should also be ensured that contacts and dialogue with women and human rights defenders are not restricted to organisations funded by the EC or EU member states, and that discussions transcend a donor-beneficiary relationship. Dialogue on a regular basis with local

WHRDs is also necessary to better identify their concerns and tailor interventions and support to their specific needs.

- **Maintain “Watch List” of violations against WHRDs**

Create a database of violations against defenders and collect case studies to highlight systematic violations and abuses against WHRDs. An alert system for monitoring and responding to threats or abuses against WHRDs can be developed based on this database. Note that such a list may only be initiated and maintained with the consent of the WHRDs and any information contained therein must be kept strictly confidential and under restricted access to ensure that it does not put WHRDs at greater risk.

- **Provide in country temporary shelter for WHRDs at grave risk**

Since threats against WHRDs are often by family and community members and WHRDs may have less access to financial and other resources, EU Missions could offer temporary shelter in-country, in-region or elsewhere; refer WHRDs to other international organisations that assist human rights defenders at risk; or contribute to local initiatives, including shelters for women survivors of violence, to accommodate protection needs of WHRDs. EU Missions can also share information about expedited visa schemes or other temporary status option in EU member states for WHRDs at grave risk.

- **Fund or provide for in-country protective accompaniment to WHRDs at risk**

Accompaniment and protection procedures should be negotiated with the WHRDs at risk. EU Missions should be sensitive to the specific security perceptions and needs of WHRDs. For example, in many cases WHRDs would seek protection not only for themselves, but together with their children.

2.2. Maintaining, suitable contacts with human rights defenders, including by receiving them in Missions and visiting their areas of work, consideration could be given to appointing specific liaison officers....

- **Maintain contacts with WHRDs, particularly those working on marginalised on ‘unpopular’ issues**

Identify and outreach to WHRDs who work in remote areas or with populations or issues that are marginalised by the broad human rights agenda or the state. In particular, outreach to isolated WHRDs who work on controversial issues, such as those who work on violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights, and rights of LGBT individuals, people with HIV/AIDS, sex workers, and others. In the context of women activists who work at the community level and have not achieved public recognition for their work, this is crucial as they are most likely to suffer human rights violations without the public being aware of it.

- **Create urgent action responses for WHRDs at risk**

Urgent action responses may include emergency visits to the WHRD’s home or place of work; extension of an open invitation to enter EU Missions compounds when faced with a threatening situation; visit the police station or detention centre where the WHRD is kept; or prompt diplomatic action on her behalf.

- **Ensure that WHRDs participate in political dialogues and reconstruction initiatives**

EU Missions should ensure WHRDs are active participants in bilateral or multilateral political human rights dialogues; general meetings on human rights in the country of the missions; processes addressing conflict/ post-conflict reconstruction, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and relevant EU documents on the inclusion of women in conflict resolution and peace initiatives. EU Missions should ensure women’s human rights form part of the agenda of these peace processes.

2.3 Providing, as and where appropriate, visible recognition to human rights defenders, through the use of appropriate publicity, visits or invitations

- **Raise the profile of WHRDs, especially those working on marginalised issues**

Providing visible recognition to WHRDs is particularly critical given the traditional separation in many countries between the mainstream human rights community and women's rights movement. Visits from EU Missions and dissemination of materials that highlight the importance and legitimacy of the work of WHRDs are necessary, especially when they challenge traditional norms and practices. EU officials visiting men and women defenders should be of equivalent rank to ensure a consistent message about the equal importance and legitimacy of the work of all defenders.

- **Conduct visits to arrested, detained and imprisoned WHRDs**

Due process violations against WHRDs must be documented from the time of arrest. EU Missions should request access to visit WHRDs held in police stations, pre-trial holding cells, any other detention centres, prisons and military bases. Note that EU delegations visiting WHRDs should include women representatives, preferably with experience in dealing with women's human rights violations, to ensure that WHRDs have the option to meet with and confide in women delegates.

When visiting WHRDs, EU Missions should also consider whether WHRDs have access to medical and counsel and if they can afford legal representation, especially in cases where they allege sexual assault and rape and that such assistance is prompt, sensitive, and timely to gather evidence of abuse and provide support for the survivor. Visit reports should ensure that confidentiality is protected and other risks associated with breaches of privacy or disclosure of information related to WHRD work does not place defenders at further risk.

- **Contribute to initiatives to establish rapid response intervention to aid WHRDs at risk**

EU Missions could support networks of legal and other professionals that could immediately visit, provide medical assistance or legal counsel, or at a minimum, monitor the situation of WHRDs who have been arrested or detained. Lawyers, medical practitioners and other related professionals should be trained to identify gender-specific abuses and standards in assessing the case of arrested or detained WHRDs.

2.4 Attending and observing, where appropriate, trials of human rights defenders

- **Account for gender-specific violations against WHRDs during all stages of the judicial proceedings**

Discriminatory legal systems, laws, practices, social attitudes or religious dicta undermine women's equal access to the law. EU Missions should demand that WHRDs enjoy equal access to the law and the judicial investigations and proceedings against them are conducted in accordance with international fair trial standards and evolving legal norms about gender-specific violations.

- **Attend and observe parallel legal system proceedings**

WHRDs may be at particular risk of unfair judgements in parallel legal or social system trials, such as community tribunals, religious or customary law courts. Such venues could function as swift channels for condemnation and "sentencing" of WHRDs who transgress accepted norms in their advocacy for women's rights.

- **Evaluate investigations of abuses against WHRDs**

Being present in-country, EU Missions are in an advantageous position to press for exhaustive and impartial investigations to be conducted regarding violations against WHRDs

and demand that those responsible are brought to justice and the victims or their relatives provided with redress and reparation.

- **Call for action against initiators of smear trials against WHRDs**

EU Missions can identify state officials and non-state actors who abuse the criminal justice system, utilise the media or community to harass or threaten the reputations of WHRDs or curtail their legitimate activities for the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Those identified in the trial observation reports could then be put forward for investigation and trial, as appropriate.

3. Promotion of respect for human rights defenders in relations with third countries and in multilateral fora (Article IV, Section 11)

The EU Guidelines is not only applicable to EU member states but also governs relations with third countries. As such, it can be used to influence governments, both within the EU and beyond, to adopt measure for the protection of WHRDs.

- **Raising individual cases on WHRDs with third countries**

Visits and dialogues with third countries can provide a unique opportunity for the EU to promote the rights of WHRDs. EU representatives should establish a practice of raising cases particularly on WHRDs with third countries, including those mentioned in the annual and country reports of the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders and other Special Rapporteurs related to the protection of WHRDs.

- **Facilitating exchanges between international and regional mechanisms on human rights defenders**

The exchanges between international and regional mechanisms on HRDs have been instrumental in the creation of regional mechanisms, such as the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the Human Rights Defenders Unit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Focal Point on Human Rights Defenders of the OSCE, and the development of regional approaches to the implementation of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. These initiatives should be continued and the EU should support regular annual meetings between international and regional mechanisms, with a focus on the concerns of WHRDs.

- **Strengthening regional mechanisms on HRDs**

Providing financial support is one way in which the EU and its member states can contribute to the strengthening of regional mechanisms. Lack of resources has been a significant obstacle on the ability of these mechanisms to carry out monitoring, investigation, and protection and follow up functions. For example, the EU and its member states can support professional staff servicing these regional mechanisms that are sensitive to the concerns of WHRDs.

- **Facilitating cross-sectoral exchanges between mechanisms on women's rights and human rights defenders at regional and international levels**

In order to ensure a gender-specific focus in the work of all mechanisms on human rights defenders at regional and international levels, the EU should also support meetings between women's rights and human rights defenders mechanisms. These could include exchanges between the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders of the ACHPR, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the African Commission's Rapporteur on Women's Rights, among other specialised mechanisms, whose mandate holders often undertake field missions and document the

obstacles WHRDs face in conducting their work and the gender-specific nature of the violations against them.

4. Support for UN Special Procedures of the Commission on Human Rights, including the Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders (Article IV, Section 12)

The role of EU and its member states in the former UN Human Rights Commission and the General Assembly has proven essential to ensuring the passage of resolutions strengthening the mandate of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders. This support has been particularly important in the context of the recent attempts by some countries, both at the Commission and at the General Assembly, to weaken the text of the Human Rights Defenders resolutions and to limit the scope of the UN Special Representative's mandate.

- **Support the renewal of the mandate of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders and other relevant UN mechanisms**

The mandate of the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders is coming to an end in 2007. The uncertainty surrounding the UN reform process and the future of the procedures established under the former UN Commission on Human Rights raises questions regarding the certainty of renewing this mandate. In this context, The EU and its member states have an essential role to play by providing support to the renewal and strengthening of the mandate of the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders and also influencing third countries to support this mandate. This proactive approach should also be adopted with regard to the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

- **Strengthen exchanges between UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders and civil society**

Support for regional and national consultations between the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders and NGOs is another important mechanism for strengthening the work of the UN Special Representative and furthering the realisation of the rights of human rights defenders as codified in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

5. Practical Support to Human Rights Defenders via Development Policy (Section IV, Article 13)

In providing practical support to WHRDs, EU delegations should seek collaboration with UN specialised agencies and other international cooperation agencies with representation at the country level, in particular those with gender-specific programmes and which support women's groups, in order to ensure coordination in the implementation of the EU Guidelines with regard to WHRDs.

5.1 Supporting human rights defenders through such activities as capacity building and public awareness campaigns

- **Translate and distribute copies of the EU Guidelines to WHRDs**

Disseminating not only the EU Guidelines, but also information about best practices, actions and measures adopted by EU Missions to implement the Guidelines will further its application and contribute to assisting WHRDs and NGOs in understanding the practical support that the EU Guidelines can offer to WHRDs.

- **Ensure WHRDs have equal access to resources, capacity building and training opportunities**

WHRDs, in particular those who work on issues of sexual and reproductive rights and economic, social and cultural rights are often marginalised and not recognised as *bona fide* human rights defenders with legitimate claims to exercise their right to defend human rights. Consequently, they are often excluded from broader opportunities available to human rights defenders in general. So EU Missions are encouraged to fund or provide capacity building trainings, and other academic and professional opportunities specifically for WHRDs and those engaging in defence of the rights noted above.

In particular, capacity building should include: Risk assessment and security training that address the gender-specific dimensions of risk and protection plans based on local context solutions; Skills and techniques on preventing, managing and coping with context-specific violations and risks of working as WHRDs; details in national and local languages on national, regional and international mechanisms and resources available for human rights defenders, and in particular WHRDs; training on monitoring, documenting and reporting violations of human rights, including against WHRDs themselves; developing documentation into advocacy materials and submission to national, regional or international human rights bodies; and campaigning techniques.

- **Strengthened coordination on capacity-building activities**

Coordination between staff of EU Missions, other EU bodies, and NGOs (international, regional and national) should be strengthened at the country level to carry out capacity building activities for human rights defenders in general, and more specifically WHRDs.

- **Set up support mechanisms for multiple roles in the private and public spheres**

Women still shoulder a disproportionate ratio of household and childrearing responsibilities. Due to the absence of support from family or community, who may oppose the activism of the WHRD, or the state (e.g. via subsidised childcare), women activists are unable to carry out their human rights work. EU Missions should ensure that women's multiple responsibilities are taken into account and they are provided with the support, including child care that will enable them to work as WHRDs.

- **Strengthen well-being support services for WHRDs**

Set up or support services for the well-being of WHRDs, including addressing their psychosocial needs on a personal, organisational and community level.

- **Support international, regional and national capacity building initiatives on WHRDs**

Support periodic national, regional and international consultations on WHRDs and assist in implementing follow-up actions, such as the development of a training manual on the documentation of violations against WHRDs, and the production of other resource materials on WHRDs.

5.2 Encouraging and supporting the establishment, and work, of national bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights....

- **Track response of national human rights bodies to concerns of WHRDs**

Encourage national human rights bodies to cover all human rights, and in particular those that disproportionately affect women. Encourage joint projects of national human rights bodies with women's rights bodies or ministries. Advocate for the concerns of WHRDs to feature in the formation of the institutional mandate and on-going decision-making processes of national bodies. National bodies should have personnel to address violations against women and WHRDs.

- **Document access of WHRDs to national human rights bodies and mechanisms**

WHRDs are often unable to access national human rights bodies and mechanisms. EU Missions should report on such access by assessing the following: Are there staff with

experience in handling complaints of gender-based violations? Are staff members sensitive to violations by non-state actors and the duty of the state to protect WHRDs? Do complaints by WHRDs receive equal attention to those by male human rights defenders? Are national institutions reluctant to take up cases deemed “controversial” because they involve defenders of sexuality or reproductive rights, including those of LGBT, sex workers or HIV/AIDS carriers?

5.3 Assisting in the establishment of networks of human rights defenders at an international level, including by facilitating meetings of human rights defenders

- **Invite or fund WHRDs to attend sessions of UN and regional Human Rights bodies and meetings of inter-governmental bodies**

EU Missions can facilitate invitations or funding for WHRDs to attend human rights meetings and events (e.g., African Union, Arab League, Council of Europe, Organization of American States, Organisation for the Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE), UN Human Rights Council, UN Treaty Bodies, UN Security Council) where they can testify and advocate on behalf of WHRDs in their country.

- **Facilitate internships and tours of WHRDs to EU member states**

Such trips could double as temporary protection measures for WHRDs facing risk, as well as strengthen ties with international networks of human rights defenders, human rights and women’s rights organisations, and enhance advocacy and future protection for the WHRDs.

- **Ensure access to international networks**

EU Missions should ensure that WHRDs are aware of and have access to existing support networks, regional and international initiatives for the support of WHRDs. For example, EU Missions can assist WHRDs who are unable or are restricted from submitting information to international or regional human rights bodies to safely contact international organisations that may be able to submit such material on their behalf. EU Missions could also fund WHRDs to attend international network meetings, solidarity events, and other women and human rights defenders activities worldwide.

- **Encourage inclusive alliances across the human rights movement**

EU Missions can facilitate through co-funding or co-sponsorship of networking events, conferences and workshops to foster and strengthen alliances across various segments of the human rights movements and incorporate a women’s human rights perspective into general human rights agenda.

5.4 Seeking to ensure that human rights defenders in third countries can access resources, including financial, from abroad

- **Prioritise funding to women’s rights programmes and initiatives**

As national and international funding to women’s rights programmes worldwide has suffered severe cut backs in recent years, the ability of women activists to advocate for women’s human rights has been compromised. EU funding priorities should emphasise the need to support the advocacy for the promotion of women’s rights. Note also the persistent lack of funding to defenders who work on the rights of LGBT, sex workers and people with HIV/AIDS. EU Missions can also urge international financial institutions and funding agencies to allocate adequate funding and resources for the full protection of WHRDs and the promotion of their rights.

- **Create a resource pool earmarked for WHRDs**

Specific funding or resource pool for WHRDs and their activities should include funding relief for WHRDs at risk such as emergency support, legal defence fund, psycho-social counselling, and provisions for family care.

- **Craft human rights and development assistance programmes to address concerns of WHRDs**

EU member states should endeavour to develop human rights and development assistance programmes that address the wider economic, political and social contexts that inhibit or restrict women's exercise of the right to defend human rights and allow for violations against WHRDs to take place.

- **Repeal governmental regulations that restrict access to funds by WHRDs**

EU institutions and its member states need to review their regulations and influence third countries to ensure that the funding process is accessible to local and national WHRDs and that registration requirements to receive funding are not being used to limit the operation of NGOs. EU institutions, delegations and missions should raise these issues in visits to third countries, and incorporate them in political dialogues between the EU and third countries.

5.5 “By ensuring that human rights education programmes promote, *inter alia*, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders....”

- **Support national implementation of Human Rights Defenders standards**

Commission or fund national-level implementation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and identify gender-specific ways of implementing the provisions of these instruments in order to further the support and protection for WHRDs at the national level.

- **Human Rights Education programmes at national and local levels**

These programmes should target law enforcement personnel, government agencies and actors in the legal system to sensitise them to the abuses faced by WHRDs and ensure that they deliver appropriate responses. Human rights education programmes at the community level should address gender stereotypes and prejudices that work to silence and restrict WHRDs in the community.

¹The recommendations contained in this document are drawn from the comments of the endorsing organisations and the outcome documents produced in national, regional and international fora, including the first international consultation on women human rights defenders (Sri Lanka, 29 Nov- Dec 2, 2005), and preceding regional consultations (e.g., in Africa (Dakar, Senegal, 18-19 November 2004) and Asia (Bangkok, Thailand, April 4-6, 2003), and national and regional workshops facilitated by AI, APWLD, Forum Asia, Front Line and other organisations.

² Ensuring protection – the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (2004), *available at* <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/GuidelinesDefenders.pdf>.

³ Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, A/RES/53/144, 8 March 1999.

⁴ The Manual on Documentation of Human Rights Violations against Women Human Rights Defenders contains guidelines for the documentation of violations and abuses against WHRDs. It is a project of APWLD and Inform and will be finalized in April 2007.