Category: **Obligation to Protect Rights of Expression and Association**

Sub-Category: Protection of Environmental Human Rights Defenders

Name of Good Practice: The **Goldman Environmental Prize for Grassroots Environmentalists**

Implementing Actors: Civil Society Organisation: The Goldman Prize

Location: Global

Key Words: Advocacy, Awareness Raising, Environmental Human Rights Defenders, Indigenous, Network, Support

Description: For the past 25 years, the Goldman Environmental Prize has honoured grassroots environmentalists from Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands and Island Nations, North America, and South and Central America. The Prize, which awards each recipient $175,000 USD, recognizes individuals for sustained and significant efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment. The Goldman Prize views grassroots leaders as “those involved in local efforts, where positive change is created through community or citizen participation in the issues that affect them.” According to the Goldman Prize, “recipients often focus on protecting endangered ecosystems and species, combating destructive development projects, promoting sustainability, influencing environmental policies and striving for environmental justice. Prize recipients are often women and men from isolated villages or inner cities who chose to take great personal risks to safeguard the environment.” Prize recipients also participate in a 10-day tour of San Francisco and Washington, D.C.—highlighted by award ceremonies in San Francisco and Washington, D.C.—including news conferences, media briefings and meetings with political and environmental leaders.

By awarding the annual prize, the Goldman Prize seeks to amplify the voices of these grassroots leaders by providing them international recognition that enhances their credibility and protects them from threats and harm; worldwide visibility for the issues they champion; and financial support to pursue their vision of a renewed and protected environment. Recipients are announced every April to coincide with Earth Day and they are selected by an international jury from confidential nominations submitted by a worldwide group of environmental organizations and individuals. In 2014, prize recipients included: Ramesh Agrawal from India, who through a small internet café organized villagers to demand their right to information about industrial development projects and succeeded in shutting down one of the largest proposed coal mines in Chhattisgarh; and Desmond D’Sa from South Africa, who rallied south Durban’s diverse and disenfranchised communities to successfully shut down a toxic waste dump that was exposing nearby residents to dangerous chemicals.

Further Information: More information on the Goldman Prize is available on its website: <http://www.goldmanprize.org/home>.