

## **DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL COALITION OF KENYAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

We, the Human Rights Defenders from Kenya meeting at the Workshop for Kenyan Human Rights Defenders organised by the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project in collaboration with Independent Medico-Legal Unit, held at the Lenana Mount Hotel, Nairobi from 26 to 29 November 2007;

***Adopting*** the definition of Human Rights Defenders contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect universally recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;

***Recalling*** that Human Rights Defenders are men and women working for the promotion and protection of nationally, regionally and internationally recognised human rights, including those working on civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights through peaceful means;

***Taking into consideration*** the significant role that Human Rights Defenders, including Women Human Rights Defenders, play in the promotion and consolidation of peace, human rights, good governance, democracy and rule of law;

***Deeply concerned*** about the great personal risks and dangers Human Rights Defenders face, including harassment, cruel and degrading punishments, torture, intimidation, death threats, imprisonment, abductions, arbitrary arrests, malicious prosecutions, extrajudicial killings and detention in unauthorised detention centres;

***Deeply concerned*** that Human Rights Defenders are, at times, subjected to public statements that dehumanize and demoralise them, including political persecution, vilification and constant surveillance;

***Deeply concerned*** about the social and cultural environment in which women operate as Human Rights Defenders and the specific risks that they face, including social stigmatisation, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, pressure exerted upon women human rights defenders by traditional practices, non-state actors, perpetrators of violence against women, and patriarchal society;

***Mindful of*** the lack or insufficiency of national mechanisms for the effective protection of Human Rights Defenders and the lack of recognition by Government of Kenya of the existence of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect universally recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 9 December 1998(UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders);

***Recognising the existence*** of international and regional instruments for the protection of Human Rights Defenders, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) Resolution on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, the Entebbe Declaration

and Plan of Action of East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network and other regional and international instruments;

*Emphasising the important* role that the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders and the African Commission Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa play in the effective protection of Human Rights Defenders;

*Recognising the importance* of solidarity among Human Rights Defenders, networking and network building at national, sub-regional levels and with the international community as a vital source of protection for individual Human Rights Defenders;

#### **CALL UPON:**

**The Government of Kenya and the Kenyan National Commission of Human Rights** to recognise the legitimacy and important role Human Rights Defenders play in the promotion and consolidation of peace, human rights, good governance, democracy and rule of law;

The Government of Kenya to ensure that national legislation and administrative regulations regarding non-governmental and civil society based organisations are in conformity with the principles enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and support the role of Human Rights Defenders;

The Government of Kenya to cooperate with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders and the African Commission Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa to develop a climate of respect for the work of Human Rights Defenders;

**The United Nations and the African Commission** special mechanisms for the protection of Human Rights Defenders to pay particular attention to the situation of Human Rights Defenders in Kenya and support their effort in the promotion and protection of human rights;

**The East African Community, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)**, the African Union and the international community to engage in dialogue with relevant stakeholders with a view to protecting Human Rights Defenders;

**The European Union** to operationalize and give full effect to the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of June 2004, in particular in providing adequate resources to Human Rights Defenders in Kenya to enable them to carry out their human rights work;

**The international community**, inter-governmental organisations and UN specialised agencies working in Kenya to include in their strategies and programmes, the promotion of human rights and support for Human Rights Defenders;

**The Human Rights Defenders in Kenya** to support and participate actively in the success of the work of the Network;

**AND RESOLVE TO:**

Stand in solidarity and demonstrate unflinching support for Human Rights Defenders, in particular those facing political and legal repression, and other forms of violations;

Support the regional and international special mechanisms for the protection of Human Rights Defenders;

Disseminate this Declaration and implement the Action Plan of the National Coalition of Kenyan Human Rights Defenders;

Firmly pledge to be part of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network.

**Adopted on 29 November 2007,  
Nairobi, Kenya**