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**Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Focus on Promotion of Human Rights and Increasing Total Number of Participants**

**March 22, 2011 (Washington, D.C.):** Participants in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles”) have gathered in Washington, D.C., this week for the two-day Annual Plenary Meeting.

Since their inception, the Voluntary Principles have been used by extractive companies to strengthen their capacity to address complex security and human rights issues in their operations around the world. Members of the Plenary include representatives from three pillars: governments, companies, and NGOs. There are currently seven member governments, eighteen companies, and nine NGOs participating in the initiative. This year, the Voluntary Principles are pleased to welcome Barrick Gold Corporation as a new corporate participant.

At the 2010 Annual Plenary Meeting, participants collectively adopted a vision to:

*Strengthen the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights’ significance as a business and human rights best practice framework by: increasing our participants’ base, strengthening accountability, and actively promoting universal respect for human rights.*

Consistent with this vision statement, during the past year, participants have focused on initiatives intended to promote the future growth of the framework, including the drafting of new entry criteria for governments, companies, and NGOs, as well as the creation of documents intended to facilitate outreach to potential participants in all three pillars. On March 21, 2011, to promote the Voluntary Principles with potential government participants, the U.S. State Department hosted an open house at which participants spoke with representatives of a number of interested governments regarding the benefits of joining the framework.

Participation in the initiative is voluntary. For questions on how to participate, contact the Secretariat at [VoluntaryPrinciples@foleyhoag.com](mailto:VoluntaryPrinciples@foleyhoag.com).

For more information about the VPs, visit [www.voluntaryprinciples.org](http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org).

### **Background on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights**

The VPs provide guidance to extractive companies on ensuring the safety of their personnel and the security of their installations in insecure environments while also respecting human rights. The initiative provides practical guidance to companies on how to do this:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of human rights risks associated with security, with a particular focus on complicity.
- Institute proactive human rights screenings of and trainings for public and private security forces.
- Ensure that the use of force is proportional and lawful.
- Develop systems for reporting and investigating allegations of human rights abuses.

By ensuring that human rights are upheld, the VPs aim to mitigate potential tensions between extractive companies and the communities within which they work. They were established in 2000 by the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the U.S. Department of State.

The Corporate Social Responsibility practice of Foley Hoag LLP serves as the Secretariat for the Voluntary Principles.

For more information, visit [www.voluntaryprinciples.org](http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org).

#### **Governments:**

Canada  
Colombia  
The Netherlands  
Norway  
Switzerland  
United Kingdom  
United States

#### **Corporations:**

Anglo American  
AngloGold Ashanti  
Barrick Gold Corporation  
BG Group  
BHP Billiton  
BP  
Chevron  
ConocoPhillips  
ExxonMobil  
Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold  
Hess Corporation  
Marathon Oil



Newmont Mining Corporation  
Occidental Petroleum Corporation  
Rio Tinto  
Shell  
Statoil  
Talisman Energy

**NGOs:**

Amnesty International  
The Fund for Peace  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Watch  
IKV Pax Christi  
International Alert  
Oxfam  
Pact  
Search for Common Ground

**Observers:**

International Committee of the Red Cross  
International Council on Mining & Metals  
International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association