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Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative Gather for Discussions on Outreach and Implementation and Welcome Five New Participants and One New Observer

18 March 2015 (London, United Kingdom): Participants in the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles Initiative”), a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on security and human rights concerns, convened in London for a two-day Annual Plenary Meeting on 17-18 March 2015.

During this week’s meetings, participants focused their discussions on initiatives and activities consistent with a strategy document adopted by the Voluntary Principles Plenary in order to guides its activities through 2016. Pursuant to this strategy document, participants agreed to work together to:

promote the provision of security in a manner that respects human rights; continue to focus on implementing the principles on the ground; increase host government and country outreach; increase the number of participants in the Initiative; and improve accountability.

At the 2015 Annual Plenary Meeting, participants specifically discussed:

- The efforts of participants to engage governments around the world in discussions regarding the benefits of Voluntary Principles participation and implementation, including the Governments of Guinea and Tanzania, both of which attended the meetings as guests of the Plenary;
- Participant initiatives to implement, or promote the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles in countries around the world, with presentations on activities in Angola, Honduras, Peru, and other countries;
- Best practices on working with public security, including the preparation of memoranda of understanding (“MOUs”);
- The harmonization of the Voluntary Principles and the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- The strengthening of the role of civil society within the Voluntary Principles Initiative;
- The adoption of roles and responsibilities documents and verification frameworks; and

- The revision of the governance rules for the Voluntary Principles Initiative in order to allow the Annual Plenary Meeting to be hosted in a country other than the home of the Government Chair;

During the two days of meeting, participants were also honored to hear:

- An opening address by U.K. Foreign Office Minister for Conflict Issues, James Duddridge, MP, and a keynote address by Edward Bickham, Chairman of the Institute of Business Ethics.

The Plenary Meeting also offered participants the opportunity to welcome eight entities that had joined the Voluntary Principles Initiative since the 2014 Annual Plenary Meeting:

- The Government of Ghana;
- Sherritt International, a resource and energy company based in Canada;
- Pacific Rubiales, an oil and gas company based in Canada;
- Newcrest Mining, a gold mining company based in Australia;
- Premier Oil, an oil and gas company based in the United Kingdom;
- Glencore, a diversified natural resource company based in Switzerland;
- New Nigeria Foundation, a non-government organization based in Nigeria; and
- The Mining and Energy Committee on Human Rights, a non-government organization based in Colombia, which was admitted as an observer.

Finally, participants welcomed the Government of the United States as the new Government Chair for the Voluntary Principles Initiative. The United States will serve as the Government Chair until the 2016 Annual Plenary Meeting. Participants offered their thanks to the Government of the United Kingdom for its service as Government Chair from March 2014 to March 2015.

Background on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative include representatives from three pillars: governments, companies, and NGOs. There are currently twenty-eight participant companies, eight participant governments, and ten participant NGOs.

The Voluntary Principles 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. Implementation of the Voluntary Principles entails steps to:

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of the 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.



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

The Corporate Social Responsibility practice of Foley Hoag LLP serves as the Secretariat for the Voluntary Principles. For questions on how to participate, contact the Secretariat at VoluntaryPrinciples@foleyhoag.com.

For more information about the Voluntary Principles, visit www.voluntaryprinciples.org.

Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative include:

Governments:

Australia
Canada
Colombia
Ghana
The Netherlands
Norway
Switzerland
United Kingdom
United States

Companies:

Anglo American
AngloGold Ashanti
Barrick Gold Corporation
BG Group
BHP Billiton
BP
Chevron
ConocoPhillips
ExxonMobil
Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold
Glencore
Hess Corporation
IAMGold
Marathon Oil
Newcrest Mining
Newmont Mining Corporation
Norsk Hydro
Occidental Petroleum Corporation
Pacific Rubiales

PanAust
Premier Oil
Rio Tinto
Shell
Sherritt International
Statoil
Talisman Energy
Total
Tullow Oil

NGOs:

Fund for Peace
Human Rights Watch
International Alert
LITE-Africa
New Nigeria Foundation
Pact
Partners for Democratic Change International
Partnership Africa Canada
Pax
Search for Common Ground

Observers:

DCAF (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces)
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM)
International Finance Corporation (IFC)
International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA)
Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB)
Mining and Energy Committee on Security and Human Rights