

Contact:

Gare A. Smith
Secretariat
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights
Foley Hoag LLP
Washington, D.C.
1-202-223-1200

Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative Gather for Discussions on In-Country Implementation Efforts and Welcome Three New Participants

3 March 2017 (Ottawa, Canada): Participants in the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles Initiative”) convened for an Annual Plenary Meeting in Ottawa, Canada on 2-3 March 2017. The Annual Plenary Meeting was hosted by the Government of the Canada, which is the outgoing Government Chair of the Initiative.

The Voluntary Principles Initiative is a multi-stakeholder initiative involving oil, gas, and mining companies, governments, and non-governmental organizations. The Initiative promotes implementation of a set of principles that guide companies on providing security for their operations in a manner that respects human rights.

At the Annual Plenary Meeting, participants discussed:

- Participants’ collective efforts to launch In-Country Implementation Pilot Groups in Nigeria, Ghana, and Myanmar. The groups are intended to promote cross-Pillar collaboration with regard to Voluntary Principles implementation and join an existing Implementation Group in Peru.
- Participants’ efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles in countries around the world, including specific presentations on activities in Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Laos, Peru, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- 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 Peru, Kenya, Honduras, Mozambique, Mexico, and Guatemala, each of which attended the Annual Plenary Meeting as a guest of the Plenary.
- Implementation of the Voluntary Principles in the context of offshore oil and gas operations.
- Participants’ use of the model clauses for agreements with security providers that were adopted at the 2016 Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Participants’ implementation of the Verification Frameworks that were adopted at the 2015 Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Revisions to the framework that guide applications to join the Initiative by prospective Observers.

These discussions were aligned with the objectives of the Voluntary Principles Strategy Document for 2016-2018, which was adopted by the Steering Committee after a strategic retreat in June 2016. Key objectives of the new strategy include:

- Coordinating the Pillars in-country through the In-Country Implementation Pilot Groups;
- Encouraging all participants to participate in verification efforts; and
- Increasing implementation of the Voluntary Principles and participation in the Voluntary Principles Initiative, especially by key host governments from high-risk, resource-rich countries, including through the development of robust Voluntary Principles National Action Plans.

The Annual Plenary Meeting also offered participants the opportunity to welcome three entities that had joined the Voluntary Principles Initiative since the 2016 Annual Plenary Meeting:

- The Government of Argentina;
- Oil Search, an oil and gas company based in Papua New Guinea; and
- Vale, a global mining company based in Brazil.

During the Annual Plenary Meeting, participants also welcomed:

- An announcement by the Mining Association of Canada that its member companies would be required to implement the Voluntary Principles;
- The publication of a Good Practice Handbook on *Use of Security Forces: Assessing and Managing Risks and Impacts* by the International Finance Corporation; and
- The publication of a *Child Rights and Security Checklist* by UNICEF, the Government of Canada, and Barrick Gold Corporation.

Finally, participants recognized the Government of the Netherlands as the new Government Chair for the Voluntary Principles Initiative. The Netherlands will serve as the Government Chair until the 2018 Annual Plenary Meeting. Participants offered their thanks to Government of Canada for its service as Government Chair from April 2016 to March 2017.

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-nine participant companies, ten 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 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:

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

Companies:

Alphamin Bisie Mining SA
Anglo American
AngloGold Ashanti
Barrick Gold Corporation
BHP Billiton
BP
Chevron
ConocoPhillips
ExxonMobil
Freeport-McMoRan
Glencore
Goldcorp
Hess Corporation

Newcrest Mining Limited
Newmont Mining Corporation
Norsk Hydro
Oil Search
Pacific Exploration & Production
PanAust
Repsol
Rio Tinto
Seven Energy
Shell
Sherritt International
Statoil
Total
Tullow Oil
Vale
Woodside Energy

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:

Colombian Mining and Energy Committee on Security and Human Rights (CME)
DCAF (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces)
International Code of Conduct Association for Private Security Contractors
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM)
International Finance Corporation (IFC)
IPIECA
Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB)