

The Voluntary Principles Initiative

2017 Annual Report

Coginta, Geneva, January 2018

Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

In August 2017, Coginta was accepted by the Plenary as Engaged NGO in the Voluntary Principles Initiative. Joining the Voluntary Principles Initiative is essential to increase our engagement as it provides us with a better understanding of the dynamic of the Initiative, a better access to knowledge resources, and more interactions with Participants. Coginta participated to monthly meetings of NGOs, will participate to the March 2018 Plenary in Washington, and intends to request formally a confirmation of its status as participant NGO. We view our provisory status as engaged NGO as a learning opportunity to step-up our commitment in countries where we work.

Procedures

While not mandatory given our status as Engaged NGO, Coginta decided to produce an annual report for accountability purposes.

Promotion of the Voluntary Principles

We developed promotion material (flyers) for the Voluntary Principles; we also drafted a promotional Pulse article on the Voluntary Principles Initiative on the LinkedIn platform (<https://goo.gl/GULDvE>).

With the NGO Bantay Kita and the University of the Philippines, Coginta organized an awareness-rising workshop on the Voluntary Principles for NGOs in the Philippines on the 21st of August 2017. From the University of the Philippines side, the organizer was prof. Cielo Magno, a member of the international board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Bantay-Kita is a nationwide coalition in the Philippines that advocates for improved natural resource governance and sustainable development.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea, where Coginta is implementing projects of community policing, contacts were taken with the Chamber of Mines to explore future cooperation. Coginta has developed a successful tool to capture and analyze local security issues and the perception of police where community policing is introduced; we are regularly contracted to run such local security diagnostics in countries such as Switzerland, Guinea, Chad, Romania, Congo. The tool includes digital mapping of survey areas, sampling techniques where no reliable population census exists, data collection using digital devices, and powerful data analyses using an insecurity index. We believe that an adapted version of the tool can serve in the diagnostic phase of the

Voluntary Principles to produce reliable data that can also serve for monitoring and impact evaluation.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Coginta has a standing partnership with the University of Lubumbashi to promote the Voluntary Principles with the Chamber of Mines in Katanga. In 2016, a one-day workshop was organized by the University of Lubumbashi for the Chamber of Mines members and several follow-up discussions took place with the Chamber of Mines during 2017.

In the Republic of Guinea, we also maintain regular contacts with the Chamber of Mines and intend to conduct a joint mission with the Chamber in 2018 to mining sites that would include a Voluntary Principles perspective.

Country Implementation

Coginta has registered offices in Chad (Bol and N'Djamena) where we implement several capacity-building projects for the European Union, including the creation of a fluvial police at the eastern frontier; the support to the training of police, gendarmerie and the nomadic guard; and the improvement of trust between the population and public security forces. This work includes training sessions in human rights, the deontology code of the national police, and the establishment of local security governance boards chaired by the civilian authority to increase the dialogue between the population and public security forces over local security issues. Among others, we currently run a survey of insecurity and police perception on the eastern border of Chad that witnesses intense activity of Boko Haram.

In 2017, Coginta was mandated by PetroChad, a Glencore company, to create a train-the-trainers course for security managers on the Voluntary Principles and human rights. The mandate included the development of a trainers' manual. Coginta was invited to a field visit in the extractive sites and meetings with local security guards to develop a well-calibrated training package. The two train-the-trainers sessions took place in March and April 2017.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Coginta has been involved in the police reform since 2009. Coginta facilitated the drafting of the community policing doctrine adopted in March 2010 by the National Police; we contributed to the drafting at ministerial level of a by-law establishing public security oversight local bodies chaired by the civilian authority and assisted a ministerial working group in drafting a guidebook for these new bodies. We further supported the strengthening of the Ministry of Interior in supervising the police and currently support the introduction of community policing in two DRC cities: Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi.

In the Republic of Guinea, where Coginta has registered offices since 2015, we run several projects with various donors and partners to support a more community-oriented police and better access to justice. We run diagnostics of security in all 5 communes of Conakry as well the cities of N'Zérékoré, Kankan, Kindia, Labé and other provincial cities; we support the police school that reopened recently with a permanent advisor and contributed to the development of the new police curriculum and training. We run also several assistance programs to the central organs of the police in Conakry. We also supported the drafting of a by-law establishing local security and delinquency prevention civilian bodies that was adopted in 2017. Currently, we assist so-called Justice Houses in three provincial cities to improve the access to justice to vulnerable and marginalized groups. In Guinea, contacts are established with the Chamber of Mines to promote the Voluntary Principles.

Lessons and Issues

The outside ring of the mines or strategic industrial sites that fall under the control of the territorial public security forces are among the most vulnerable areas exposed to disproportionate use of force can occur. Training of territorial police or gendarmerie units might not be enough; a training package should reach out civilian authorities (governors, préfets, and their deputies) who, in most jurisdictions, are responsible for public order.

To our knowledge, the open access training material, guidebooks and resources in the VPs have a bias towards security managers or, in other words, are primarily meant for managers; there is a demand for resources that translate the abstract guiding principles into a language adapted for guards with often little education. Resources in the form of comics, short videos, and situation-related visuals would be relevant for security guards. Such material would translate the existing codified instruments (UN codes, national deontology codes) into resources likely to be easily assimilated by frontline guards and police.