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

**14 March 2018 (Washington D.C., United States):** Participants in the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles Initiative”) convened for an Annual Plenary Meeting in Washington D.C on 13-14 March 2018. The 2018 Annual Plenary Meeting was hosted by the Government of The Netherlands, 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 of the Initiative discussed:

- Participants’ efforts to facilitate the work of In-Country Implementation Pilot Groups in Ghana, Myanmar, and Nigeria. The Pilot Groups, which were launched in 2017, are intended to promote collaboration with regard to Voluntary Principles implementation, and are modelled on an existing In-Country Implementation Group that has been active in Peru for several years;
- The adoption of revisions to the Voluntary Principles Initiative Governance Rules, including amendments to the Corporate Pillar Entry Framework that will allow for consideration of applications from a broader range of natural resource extraction companies;
- Participants’ efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles in countries around the world, including specific presentations on activities in Colombia, Ghana, Nigeria, Peru, and Myanmar;
- Implementation of the Voluntary Principles in the context of offshore oil and gas operations;
- Challenges and successes with respect to the provision of public security at extractive sites, including how Participants can strengthen the vetting of security forces;
- Security and human rights challenges posed by artisanal mining;

- Reflections and perspectives from Participants who have recently joined the Voluntary Principles Initiative;
- Participants' use of the model clauses for agreements with security providers that were adopted at the 2016 Annual Plenary Meeting in Bogotá;
- Participants' implementation of the Verification Frameworks that were adopted at the 2015 Annual Plenary Meeting in London; and
- The use of new implementation tools, including: site-specific case studies; guidance on auditing Voluntary Principles implementation; guidelines on protecting children's rights in the context of security provision; and human rights due diligence protocols in conflict-impacted extractives environments.

Discussions at the Annual Plenary Meeting were aligned with the objectives of the Voluntary Principles Strategy Document for 2016-2019, which was originally adopted by the Steering Committee in 2016 and further revised after a strategic retreat in The Hague in October 2017. Key objectives of the strategy include:

- Supporting coordinated efforts by Participants to advance in-country implementation of the Voluntary Principles through the Implementation Pilot Groups;
- Encouraging all Participants to verify their implementation 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 five entities that have joined the Voluntary Principles Initiative since the 2017 Annual Plenary Meeting in Ottawa:

- Agnico Eagle, a Canadian-based gold mining company with operations focused on North America;
- Galp Energia, a Portuguese oil and gas company that operates in four continents;
- CDA Collaborative Learning Project, an NGO based in the United States that is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of civil society organizations working in conflict-affected environments;
- Coginta, a Swiss-based NGO committed to police reforms; and
- COMPPART, a peacebuilding organization focused on improving relations between civil society, communities, and public security in Nigeria.

Finally, Participants recognized the Government of the United Kingdom as the new Government Chair for the Voluntary Principles Initiative. The United Kingdom will serve as the Government Chair until the 2019 Annual Plenary Meeting. Participants offered their thanks to the



Government of The Netherlands for its service as Government Chair from March 2017 to March 2018.

### **About 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 thirty Company Participants, ten Government Participants, and thirteen NGO Participants.

The Voluntary Principles provide guidance to extractive companies on ensuring the safety of their personnel and the security of their installations while also respecting and advancing 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 as part of a joint 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 local 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](mailto:VoluntaryPrinciples@foleyhoag.com).

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

Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative include:

#### **Companies:**

Agnico Eagle  
Alphamin Bisie Mining SA  
Anglo American  
AngloGold Ashanti  
Barrick Gold Corporation

BHP Billiton  
BP  
Chevron  
ConocoPhillips  
ExxonMobil  
Freeport-McMoRan Inc.  
Frontera Energy  
Galp Energia  
Glencore  
Goldcorp  
Newcrest Mining Limited  
Newmont Mining Corporation  
Norsk Hydro  
Oil Search  
PanAust  
Repsol  
Rio Tinto  
Seven Energy  
Shell  
Sherritt International  
Statoil  
Total  
Tullow Oil  
Vale  
Woodside Energy

**Governments:**

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

**NGOs:**

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects  
Coginta

COMPPART

The Fund for Peace

Human Rights Watch

IMPACT

International Alert

LITE-Africa

New Nigeria Foundation

Pact

Partners for Democratic Change International

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)