

**THE INITIATIVE OF THE
VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
GOVERNANCE RULES**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	1
SECTION II.	DEFINITIONS	1
SECTION III.	GOVERNANCE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE.....	5
SECTION IV.	WORKING GROUPS AND IN-COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES	19
SECTION V.	ENTRY CRITERIA AND ADMISSION PROCESS	19
SECTION VI.	REPORTING.....	20
SECTION VII.	USE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES.....	21
SECTION VIII.	FINANCE.....	21
SECTION IX.	MODIFICATION.....	21
SECTION X.	DISCONTINUATION.....	21
SECTION XI.	PARTICIPANTS’ RIGHTS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
SECTION XII.	MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND PENALTIES FOR NON-ADHERENCE	23
SECTION XIII.	DISSOLUTION	25
APPENDICES	26

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

THE INITIATIVE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

GOVERNANCE RULES

Section I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- Paragraph 1. Name. The name of the initiative is the “Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights” (“Voluntary Principles Initiative.”)
- Paragraph 2. Mission Statement. The Voluntary Principles Initiative, which is comprised of three Pillars (companies, governments, and non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”)) seeks to: actively promote universal respect for human rights in the provision of security for the activities of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy in a manner guided by the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (“Voluntary Principles”); strengthen implementation and accountability; and increase the number of Voluntary Principles Initiative Participants. The Voluntary Principles are a set of principles, set forth in Appendix 1, that are intended to guide companies in maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Paragraph 3. This document sets forth commitments and shared understandings by the Participants regarding participation in the Voluntary Principles Initiative. The Voluntary Principles and this document do not create any legally binding obligations or standards under international or domestic law.
- Paragraph 4. This document addresses the work of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, and it does not apply to the Association of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles Association”). The Voluntary Principles Association is governed by the Articles of Association of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

Section II. DEFINITIONS

- Paragraph 1. These terms have the following definitions when used in this statement of the governance rules:
- “Annual Plenary Host Government” means a host country government that has been selected by the Steering Committee to serve as the physical host of an Annual Plenary Meeting in accordance with the procedures set forth in Appendix 6. It is possible, but not necessary, for

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

the “Government Chair”, the “Annual Plenary Host Government” and the “Annual Plenary Partner Government” to be the same.

- “Annual Plenary Partner Government” means a government that represents the physical location of the Annual Plenary Meeting if that location is not the home of the Government Chair.
- “Annual Plenary Meeting” means the meeting of the full Plenary, held once a year, which all Participants are expected to attend, in accordance with the Participation Criteria, referenced in Section VI and set forth in Appendix 2.
- “Annual Report” means the report that each Participant submits on an annual basis describing efforts to implement or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles, pursuant to the Participation Criteria, referenced in Section VI and set forth in Appendix 2, and the Reporting Guidelines referenced in Section VII and set forth in Appendix 5.
- “Applicant Company” means a company that has requested admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative, pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New Companies, referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendix 3.1.
- “Applicant Government” means a Government that has requested admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative, pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission and Participation of New Governments, referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendix 3.2.
- “Applicant NGO” means an NGO that has requested admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative, pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New NGOs, referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendix 3.3.
- “Applicant Observer” means an organization that has requested admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative as an Observer.
- “Close Consultation” means the act of consulting with the Plenary through communications directed either to the three Pillars collectively, or individually, and the provision of time for intra-Pillar dialogue with regard to the subject matter(s) at issue in the communication.
- “Consensus” means absence of objection by any Participants present at the time of a decision. Participants may participate by proxy, except where proxy voting is not allowed.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- “Corporate Pillar” means all Participants that are companies including both (i) those companies that have been approved as Participants pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New Companies set forth in Appendix 3.1, and (ii) those companies that were approved prior to the drafting of the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New Companies.
- “Engaged Government” means a government that has been admitted to the Voluntary Principles Initiative pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission and Participation of New Governments, referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendix 3.2, but has not yet been approved as a “Participant Government.”
- “Engaged NGO” means a NGO that has been admitted to the Voluntary Principles Initiative pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission and Participation of New NGOs, referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendix 3.3, but has not yet been approved as a “Participant NGO.”
- “Extraordinary Plenary Meeting” means any meeting of the Plenary other than the Annual Plenary Meeting.
- “Formal Voluntary Principles Activity” means any activity that has been approved by the Plenary in order to ensure that the work of the Voluntary Principles Initiative is conducted in a manner consistent with its stated mission.
- “Government Chair” means, in any given year, the Participant Government that either hosts or coordinates with the Corporate Pillar, to host the Annual Plenary Meeting. The Government Chair will also work with an Annual Plenary Partner Government and, if relevant, an Annual Plenary Host Government, if the Government Chair does not represent the physical location of the meeting. The Government Chair maintains ultimate responsibility for the Annual Plenary Meeting. The Government Chair also chairs Steering Committee meetings and any Extraordinary Plenary Meetings held during its tenure.
- “Government Pillar” means all Participants that are either Participant Governments or Engaged Governments.
- “Host Government” means the government of a country in which a Participant is operating.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- “Inactive Participant” means a Participant that is temporarily unable to exercise its rights as a Participant after it has been declared to be inactive by the Plenary, pursuant to the process set forth Section XII, Paragraph 4.
- “In-country Implementation Process” means a country-based multi-stakeholder process that has been established by Participants, as described in Section IV, Paragraph 2.
- “Invited Guests” means any individual or entity that the Steering Committee invites to attend a meeting pursuant to Section III, Paragraph 4 (b)(1)(a) and Section III, Paragraph 4(c)(2)(a).
- “Observer” means an organization that (i) has been approved to attend certain proceedings of the Voluntary Principles Initiative pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of Observers set forth in Appendix 4 or (ii) was granted Observer status prior to the adoption of the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of Observers.
- “NGO Pillar” means all Participants and Engaged NGOs that have been approved for admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New NGOs set forth in Appendix 3.3.
- “Participant” means any government, company, or NGO that participates in the Voluntary Principles Initiative, per the Participation Criteria, that has not been declared to be an Inactive Participant. Participant status is gained by (i) being a founding participant of the Voluntary Principles, (ii) being approved pursuant to the admission procedures in place before the adoption of entry criteria, or (iii) being approved pursuant to the relevant entry criteria referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendices 3.1-3.3.
- “Participant Government” means a government that was either a founding participant at the launch of the Voluntary Principles or a government that has been approved pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission and Participation of New Governments, referenced in Section V and set forth in Appendix 3.2.
- “Participation Criteria” means the foundational Voluntary Principles governance document, adopted unanimously at the 2007 Annual Plenary Meeting, which is referenced in Section VI and set forth in Appendix 2.
- “Pillar” means one of the three stakeholder groups of Participants: governments, companies and NGOs.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- “Plenary” means the body consisting of all Participants, per the Participation Criteria, that is described in Section III, Paragraph 2(a), and that serves as the main decision-making body for the Voluntary Principles Initiative.
- “Proxy Voting” means a voting process as set forth in Section III, Paragraph 3(a)(2)(c) and Paragraph 3(b)(2)(b)(i).
- “Secretariat” means the day-to-day administrative body for the Voluntary Principles Association that will render administrative support to the Voluntary Principles Initiative.
- “Steering Committee” means the primary executive body for the Voluntary Principles Initiative, as described in Section III, Paragraph 2(b).
- “Steering Committee Member” means a Participant serving on the Steering Committee at any given time, pursuant to the guidelines set forth in Section III, Paragraph 2(b). “Steering Committee Members” means the plural of Steering Committee Member.
- “Voluntary Principles” means the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, as set forth in Appendix 1.
- “Voluntary Principles Association” means the Association of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, an association incorporated in The Netherlands.
- “Working Group” means a group that has been established by the Plenary, or by the Steering Committee, in close consultation with the Pillars, to focus on specific issues, as described in Section IV, Paragraph 1.

Section III. GOVERNANCE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE

Paragraph 1. Structure. Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative are organized as follows:

- (a) The Three Pillars:
 1. The Corporate Pillar. The Corporate Pillar consists of all Participants that are companies. There is no limit on the number of companies that can be members of the Corporate Pillar.
 2. The Government Pillar. The Government Pillar consists of Participant Governments and Engaged Governments. There is no limit on the number of governments that can be members of the Government Pillar.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

3. The NGO Pillar. The NGO Pillar consists of Participant NGOs and Engaged NGOs. There is no limit on the number of NGOs that can be members of the NGO Pillar.

(b) Observers. Observers are permitted to partake in activities of the Voluntary Principles Initiative provided they strictly follow all requirements set forth in Appendix 4.

Paragraph 2. Institutional Bodies. The institutional bodies of the Voluntary Principles Initiative are:

(a) The Plenary. The Plenary is the main decision-making body of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

1. The Plenary consists of all Participants.

2. A Participant may be represented at a Plenary meeting by as many individuals as such Participant deems appropriate.

3. One Participant in the Government Pillar serves as the Government Chair for the Plenary. During its tenure, the Government Chair either hosts, or coordinates with the Corporate Pillar, to host the Annual Plenary Meeting and any Extraordinary Plenary Meetings. The Government Chair will also work with an Annual Plenary Partner Government and, if relevant, an Annual Plenary Host Government, if the Government Chair is not the physical host of the meeting. The Government Chair also chairs Steering Committee meetings.

i. The Government Chair is selected each year by the Government Pillar.

ii. The term of the Government Chair is one (1) year. The term is non-renewable, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary.

(b) The Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is the primary executive body for the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

1. The Steering Committee consists of Participants from each of the three Pillars (each Participant, a "Steering Committee Member.").

a. Each Pillar is represented by at least two (2) and no more than four (4) Steering Committee Members.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- b. Each Pillar has four (4) votes. Voting authority for each Pillar is evenly distributed among the Steering Committee Members representing that Pillar.
 2. Steering Committee Members representing each Pillar are selected by each of the three Pillars under arrangements determined by the respective Pillar.
 - a. One Steering Committee Member from the Government Pillar is the Government Chair.
 - b. Each of the Pillars may decide to replace any of its representatives on the Steering Committee at any time. The replacement Steering Committee Member serves the remainder of the term of the original Steering Committee Member.
 3. More than one person may take part in each Steering Committee meeting on behalf of any one Steering Committee Member.
 4. A Steering Committee Member may designate any Participant from the same Pillar to represent that Steering Committee Member at a Steering Committee meeting.
 5. Each Steering Committee Member serves a term of two (2) years.
 - a. After two (2) consecutive terms, a Steering Committee Member must take a one (1) year break.
 - b. Notwithstanding the foregoing, and to the extent practicable, a Steering Committee Member continues to serve until its successor has been named.
 - c. The terms of Steering Committee Members begin and end at the conclusion of the Annual Plenary Meeting. In the event that a Steering Committee Member is unable to serve its full term, a replacement is selected by the corresponding Pillar. The replacement Steering Committee Member serves the remainder of the term of the original Steering Committee Member.
- (c) The Secretariat. The Secretariat is the day-to-day administrative body for the Voluntary Principles Association that will render administrative support to the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

1. To fulfill the duties of the Secretariat, the Steering Committee may, with the approval of the Plenary, (i) make arrangements with third-party organizations; or (ii) recruit and hire employees.
 2. If a third-party organization is selected to serve as Secretariat, the terms of such arrangement are set by the Voluntary Principles Association.
- (d) The Voluntary Principles Association. The Voluntary Principles Association is an entity that addresses the financial and administrative needs of the Voluntary Principles Initiative as set forth in the Articles of Association of the Voluntary Principles Association. Among other tasks and activities, the Voluntary Principles Association secures Secretariat services for the Initiative and holds any financial accounts.

Paragraph 3. Responsibilities and Decision-Making Authority of the Plenary, the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat.

- (a) The Plenary.
1. The responsibilities of the Plenary include, but are not limited to:
 - a. approving the annual work plan;
 - b. establishing implementation priorities, goals, and objectives;
 - c. approving Formal Voluntary Principles Activities, as necessary, in order to ensure that the work of the Voluntary Principles Initiative is conducted in a manner consistent with its stated mission;
 - d. establishing Working Groups;
 - e. deliberating and voting on any recommendation put forward by the Steering Committee regarding implementation and governance issues;
 - f. deliberating and voting on any recommendation put forward by the Steering Committee to declare a Participant to be Inactive;
 - g. deliberating and voting on any recommendation put forward by the Steering Committee to reinstate an Inactive Participant;

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- h. deliberating and voting on any recommendation put forward by the Steering Committee to modify the governance document;
- i. deliberating and voting on any recommendation put forward by the Steering Committee to modify the Voluntary Principles;
- j. deliberating and voting on any other proposals put forward by the Steering Committee;
- k. expelling a Participant;
- l. approving Voluntary Principles Initiative documents for public release;
- m. removing a third-party Secretariat prior to the expiration of relevant arrangements;
- n. dissolving the Voluntary Principles Initiative;
- o. other responsibilities necessary to conduct the activities set forth in a-n, above.

2. Consensus and Voting

- a. The Plenary makes a good faith effort to make all decisions by Consensus.
- b. If Consensus is not possible, matters may be decided by a formal vote. At least seventy-five percent (75%) of the Participants from each Pillar that are voting at an Annual Plenary Meeting or Extraordinary Plenary Meeting must vote affirmatively in order for a vote to be carried.
 - i. Each Participant is only entitled to one (1) vote.
 - ii. Any Participant may recuse itself from a specific vote.
 - iii. A Participant NGO is to recuse itself from a vote in regards to a fellow Participant that it has a financial or material relationship with that is relevant to the Voluntary Principles.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- c. At any Extraordinary Plenary Meeting, a Participant that is unable to take part in a vote may authorize another Participant to act on its behalf by proxy. A written copy of the authorization must be provided to the Secretariat prior to the vote. Proxies may be delivered by email.
 - d. For any Annual Plenary Meeting or Extraordinary Plenary Meeting, quorum is to be fifty-one percent (51%) of each Pillar. At any Extraordinary Plenary Meeting, quorum is to include proxies.
- (b) The Steering Committee.
- 1. The joint responsibilities of the Steering Committee include, but are not limited to:
 - a. In close consultation with the Pillars,
 - i. developing the objectives, timetables, and budgets to support the goals identified and approved by the Plenary at the Annual Plenary Meeting in the annual work plan;
 - ii. establishing Working Groups;
 - iii. considering policy issues specific to the Voluntary Principles Initiative;
 - iv. ensuring that the multi-stakeholder nature of the Voluntary Principles Initiative is maintained and fully reflected in the work of the Voluntary Principles Initiative at all levels;
 - v. representing the Plenary in making any decisions to approve applications of all applicants, and Invited Guests;
 - vi. approving the national plans of Engaged Governments;
 - vii. identifying and overseeing outreach to potential Participants;
 - viii. approving the agendas and arrangements for the Annual Plenary Meeting and any Extraordinary Plenary Meetings; and

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- ix. approving Voluntary Principles Initiative documents for public release.
- b. Making recommendations for consideration by the Plenary regarding:
 - i. any proposal that a Participant be declared an Inactive Participant by the Plenary pursuant to the process set forth in Section XII.
 - ii. the extension of the terms of Observers approved pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of Observers.
- c. consulting regularly with Participants from all three Pillars to ensure understanding and communication of Participant priorities, comments, suggestions, and concerns;
- d. conducting regular meetings in order to ensure that the work of the Voluntary Principles Initiative is conducted in a manner consistent with its stated mission;
- e. establishing timetables and deadlines for Steering Committee work;
- f. approving agendas for Steering Committee meetings;
- g. overseeing any dispute resolution conducted pursuant to the processes and procedures referenced in Section VII, and set forth in the Participation Criteria at Appendix 2;
 - i. in coordination with the Secretariat, overseeing the production of documents for review at any Plenary Meeting, including the delivery of those documents for Plenary review on a schedule that, to the extent practicable, provides all Participants with a reasonable time in which review the documents prior to the meeting; and
 - ii. developing and submitting the annual work plan and estimated costs for Plenary approval;
- h. deciding on any administrative matters necessary to conduct the work of the Steering Committee;

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- i. reviewing financial disclosures submitted by NGO Pillar Participants, pursuant to Section X, Paragraph 2.
- j. Other responsibilities necessary to conduct the activities set forth in a-i, above.

2. Consensus and Voting

- a. The Steering Committee makes a good faith effort to make all decisions by Consensus.
- b. If Consensus is not possible, matters may be decided by a formal vote. At least eight (8) out of twelve (12) votes with at least two (2) from each Pillar must be cast affirmatively in order for a vote to be carried.
 - i. Any Steering Committee Member that is unable to take part in a vote may authorize another Steering Committee Member of the same Pillar to act on its behalf by proxy, by delivering a written copy of the authorization to the Secretariat prior to the vote. Proxies may be delivered by email.
- c. A Steering Committee Member representing the NGO Pillar is to recuse itself from a vote concerning a fellow Participant with which such NGO has a financial or material relationship provided that such relationship could be deemed reasonably relevant to the Voluntary Principles.

(c) The Secretariat.

1. Responsibilities of the Secretariat include, but are not limited to:
 - a. supporting the Government Chair, the Corporate Pillar, and, as appropriate, the Annual Plenary Partner Government and the Annual Plenary Host Government, with the coordination of the Annual Plenary Meeting and any face-to-face meetings of Participants held during the year, including Extraordinary Plenary Meetings;
 - b. supporting the work of the Plenary and the Steering Committee, including by preparing meeting minutes;
 - c. managing engagement with applicants to the Voluntary Principles;

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- d. facilitating the work of any Working Groups formed by the Plenary or the Steering Committee;
- e. facilitating dispute resolution proceedings and close consultations between Participants;
- f. maintaining the Voluntary Principles website;
- g. overseeing the financial accounts held by, or for, the Voluntary Principles Initiative;
- h. reporting regularly to Steering Committee regarding Secretariat activities; and
- i. at the direction of the Steering Committee and in a manner consistent with annual work plan:
 - i. Engaging stakeholders and responding to inquiries regarding the Voluntary Principles;
 - ii. Developing case studies on best practices;
 - iii. Providing administrative support to In-Country Implementation Processes; and
 - iv. Researching and drafting reports on specific issues.
- j. day-to-day administrative decision-making;
- k. other responsibilities necessary to conduct the activities set forth in a-j, above.

Paragraph 4. Meetings of the Plenary and the Steering Committee

(a) General Rule on Communications between Participants.

1. As stated in the Participation Criteria, in order to facilitate the goals of the Voluntary Principles Initiative and to encourage full and open dialogue, all proceedings of the Voluntary Principles Initiative are on a non-attribution and non-quotation basis.
 - a. Certain categories of internal documents, including minutes, and other documents as identified by the Steering Committee, in close consultation with the Pillars, or by the Plenary, may be prepared in a manner that

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

attributes statements to specific Participants and their representatives.

2. All Voluntary Principles Initiative documents are to be considered confidential unless the Plenary or the Steering Committee, in close consultation with the Pillars has approved them for public release. Documents that are primarily related to the activities of a specific Participant are not to be approved for public release without the express permission of that Participant. No confidential documents are to be distributed to non-Participants except as required by valid legal process or otherwise required by law.
3. Notwithstanding the provisions in this Paragraph 4(a), Participants may publish their own Voluntary Principles Annual Reports, provided such Annual Reports do not contain confidential information about any other Participant unless that Participant has consented to the release of the information.
4. As stated in Appendix 4, Observers are required to sign a statement acknowledging the confidentiality provisions which all Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative are expected to follow, as set forth in the Participation Criteria.

(b) Plenary Meetings.

1. The Plenary meets in-person no less frequently than annually. In general, a Plenary meeting is a forum to review implementation progress, share best practices, address governance issues, set priorities and approve the annual work plan and budget.
 - a. The Steering Committee may authorize Invited Guests to attend specific Plenary meetings. Such Invited Guests are to be informed of the confidentiality requirements of the Voluntary Principles Initiative as set forth in Section III, Paragraph 4(a) and are required to provide written acknowledgment of such requirements.
2. Annual Plenary Meetings are chaired by the Government Chair and, as appropriate, co-chaired by an Annual Plenary Host Government. As set forth in the Participation Criteria, Participants are expected to attend the Annual Plenary Meeting.
 - a. The dates for the Annual Plenary Meeting are determined by the Government Chair and distributed in writing to the

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- Plenary by the Government Chair (or the Secretariat, at the request of the Government Chair) at least four (4) months before the meeting.
- b. The agenda for the Annual Plenary Meeting is proposed by the Government Chair and the Corporate Pillar in close consultation with the Steering Committee and the Secretariat, and approved by the Steering Committee.
 - c. The approved agenda for the Annual Plenary Meeting is distributed to the Plenary by the Government Chair (or by the Secretariat, at the request of the Government Chair) no less than one (1) month before the meeting.
 - d. The agenda for the Annual Plenary Meeting is to include, at a minimum, the following orders of business:
 - i. Announcement of Steering Committee Members;
 - ii. Announcement of the Government Chair for the immediately following year;
 - iii. Announcement of the location and host of the next Annual Plenary Meeting if the meeting will not be physically hosted by the Government Chair;
 - iv. Presentation for approval of the annual work plan and annual budget for the Steering Committee and Secretariat; and
 - v. Requests to extend the terms of any Observers approved to attend certain Voluntary Principles Initiatives proceedings pursuant to the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of Observers set forth in Appendix 4.
 - e. The Steering Committee, in coordination with the Secretariat, oversees the production of documents for the Annual Plenary Meeting, including the delivery of those documents to the Plenary for review prior to the meeting.
3. Extraordinary Plenary Meetings may be organized by the Government Chair with the approval of the Steering Committee. As set forth in the Participation Criteria, Participants are expected to attend Extraordinary Plenary Meetings as appropriate and commensurate with resource constraints.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- a. Extraordinary Plenary Meetings may be held either in-person or through the use of teleconferencing technology.
 - b. The announcement of an in-person Extraordinary Plenary Meeting is distributed to the Plenary in writing at least three months in advance of the proposed date(s).
 - c. The announcement of an Extraordinary Plenary Meeting via teleconference is distributed to the Plenary in writing at least three weeks in advance of the proposed date(s).
4. Attendance at Plenary meetings is limited to Participants, Engaged Governments, Engaged NGOs, the Secretariat, Observers, and Invited Guests as deemed necessary by the Steering Committee.
5. The Secretariat prepares minutes for each Plenary meeting.
- a. The Secretariat distributes these minutes to the Participants no later than six (6) weeks after the meeting.
 - i. Members of the Steering Committee may report any corrections to the minutes to the Secretariat within two (2) weeks.
 - b. If no corrections are made to the minutes by the Steering Committee, the Secretariat is to distribute the minutes to the Plenary.
 - i. Members of the Plenary may report any corrections to the minutes to the Secretariat within two (2) weeks.
 - c. Once all corrections from the Steering Committee and the Plenary have been incorporated into the minutes from the Plenary meeting, the Secretariat posts the minutes to the password-protected portion of the Voluntary Principles website and notifies the Plenary that it has done so.
- (c) Steering Committee Meetings.
1. The Steering Committee meets, as necessary, to conduct the business of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.
 - a. To the extent possible, Steering Committee meetings are to be held on a monthly basis.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- i. The Government Chair proposes the date and time for each meeting of the Steering Committee.
- b. Meetings of the Steering Committee are ordinarily held via teleconference.
- c. The agenda for each monthly meeting is proposed by the Government Chair in close consultation with the Steering Committee and the Secretariat.
 - i. The agenda for each monthly Steering Committee meeting is distributed to the Steering Committee by the Government Chair (or the Secretariat, at the request of the Government Chair) no fewer than one (1) week in advance.
 - ii. Additional items may be added to the agenda for the monthly Steering Committee meeting before or during the meeting if either (a) there is no objection or (b) there are at least eight (8) Steering Committee votes affirmatively supporting the addition.
- d. Any Steering Committee Member may propose that a special meeting of Steering Committee be held, either in-person or via teleconference.
 - i. If a Steering Committee Member proposes an in-person meeting of the Steering Committee, this proposal is to be submitted to Steering Committee Members at least four (4) weeks in advance.
 - ii. If a Steering Committee Member proposes a meeting of the Steering Committee via teleconference, this proposal is to be submitted to the members of the Steering Committee at least one (1) week in advance.
 - iii. A proposal for a special meeting of the Steering Committee is to be approved if either (a) there is no objection or (b) there are at least eight (8) Steering Committee votes affirmatively supporting the proposal.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

2. Except as provided herein, attendance at Steering Committee meetings is limited to Steering Committee Members and representatives of the Secretariat.
 - a. The Steering Committee may authorize Invited Guests to attend specific Steering Committee meetings, as necessary, to address specific issues or concerns. Third parties are to be informed of confidentiality requirements of the Voluntary Principles Initiative as set forth in Section III, Paragraph 4(a) and are required to provide written acknowledgement of such requirements
 - b. As set forth in Section III, Paragraph 2(b)(4), a Steering Committee Member that is unable to attend a particular meeting may designate another Participant from the same Pillar to attend that meeting in its place, and should inform the Steering Committee of such arrangements prior to the meeting. That Participant replacing such absent Participant has all the responsibilities and privileges of the Steering Committee Member it replaces.
3. The Secretariat prepares minutes for each meeting of the Steering Committee.
 - a. The Secretariat distributes these minutes to the Steering Committee no later than two (2) weeks after the meeting.
 - b. Members of the Steering Committee may report any corrections to the minutes to the Secretariat within one (1) week.
 - i. Once any corrections from the Steering Committee have been incorporated into the minutes, the Secretariat posts the minutes to the password-protected portion of the Voluntary Principles website and notifies the Plenary that it has done so.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

Section IV. WORKING GROUPS AND IN-COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

Paragraph 1. Working Groups. The Plenary or the Steering Committee, in close consultation with the Pillars, may create Working Groups to focus on specific issues.

- (a) Participation in a Working Group is open to any interested Participant.
- (b) Upon invitation by the Steering Committee, Observers may join in specific Working Group meetings, pursuant to Appendix 4.
- (c) Working Groups may be chaired by the Secretariat or one of the Participants.
- (d) A Working Group may continue work until the group's mandate is complete and/or the Steering Committee or Plenary decides to end its mandate.

Paragraph 2. In-Country Implementation Processes.

- (e) In-Country Implementation Processes are country-based multi-stakeholder processes aimed at strengthening implementation of the Voluntary Principles in a specific country.
- (f) As appropriate, Participants may form ad hoc country- or region-specific groups to support In-Country Implementation Processes.

Section V. ENTRY CRITERIA AND ADMISSION PROCESS

Paragraph 1. The entry criteria and admission processes for all three Pillars of the Voluntary Principles Initiative are stated in the following documents:

- (a) Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New Companies, set forth in Appendix 3.1;
- (b) Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission and Participation of New Governments, set forth in Appendix 3.2; and
- (c) Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New NGOs, set forth in Appendix 3.3.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

Paragraph 2. The entry criteria and admission process for Observers is stated in the Voluntary Principles Framework for the Admission of New Observers, set forth in Appendix 4.

Paragraph 3. The Steering Committee shall maintain a register in which the names and addresses of all Participants, specifying, the Pillar to which each of them belong.

(a) Every Participant is under obligation to provide the Steering Committee with:

1. its address;
2. a primary contact;
3. an electronic address where the Participant may be reached; and
4. any changes to the data mentioned under a, b, and c.

(b) Such giving notice of the electronic address also entails consent for being sent all notices and communications as well as notices convening meetings, insofar as they are authorized to attend these, by electronic means.

Paragraph 4. It is understood that a Participant will apply for membership in the Voluntary Principles Association as soon as it is admitted to the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Section VI. REPORTING

Paragraph 1. Each Participant reports annually to the Plenary on its efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles.

(a) These reports are to be drafted in a manner consistent with the Voluntary Principles Reporting Guidelines, as set forth in Appendix 5.

Paragraph 2. Any Participant's status may be reviewed and such Participant may be declared inactive if it fails to submit an Annual Report that meets criteria specified in the Reporting Guidelines.

Paragraph 3. The Secretariat is responsible for producing a Summary Annual Report each year highlighting good practice and progress in Participants' implementation of the Voluntary Principles. The Summary Annual Report is not to reference specific Participants and is made public.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

Paragraph 4. Notwithstanding the provisions in this Section or in Section III, para. 4(a), Participants may publish their own Voluntary Principles Annual Reports, provided such Annual Reports do not contain confidential information about any other Participant unless that Participant has consented to the release of the information.

Section VII. USE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES

Paragraph 1. The Voluntary Principles may be implemented by any interested party.

Section VIII. FINANCE

Paragraph 1. The Voluntary Principles Association is the financial body of the Voluntary Principles Initiative. Each year, the Steering Committee makes a recommendation to the Plenary at the Annual Plenary Meeting, regarding the annual work plan for the Initiative pursuant to Section III(3)(a)(1)(a). Upon approval by the Plenary, the work plan for the Voluntary Principles Initiative will be submitted to the Voluntary Principles Association for consideration in developing an annual budget.

Paragraph 2. Each Participant in the NGO Pillar is required to disclose all sources and amounts of income, with details on the purpose of funds received from other Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

(a) This disclosure is to be made on an annual basis.

(b) The disclosure report is to be submitted to the Steering Committee, via the Secretariat, at the same time as the Participant submits its Annual Report. The Steering Committee is responsible for reviewing these disclosures.

Section IX. MODIFICATION

Paragraph 1. These governing rules may be modified by the Plenary.

Section X. DISCONTINUATION

Paragraph 1. Any Participant may discontinue its participation in the Voluntary Principles Initiative at any time.

(a) A Participant should endeavor to submit a written notification of discontinuation to the Secretariat. Immediately upon receipt, the Secretariat will distribute the notification to the members of the Steering Committee.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

- (b) A Participant's discontinuation is effective upon receipt of the written notification by the Steering Committee.

Section XI. ADDRESSING PARTICIPANT CONCERNS

Paragraph 1. Any concerns related to a Participant's adherence to the core membership expectations set forth in Section XII, Paragraph 1(b-c) may be raised pursuant to the process set forth in Section XII, Paragraph 3.

Paragraph 2. Any concerns related to a Participant's sustained lack of efforts in implementing the Voluntary Principles may be raised pursuant to the dispute resolution process set forth in the Participation Criteria, Appendix 2.

Paragraph 3. Any concerns relating to the administration of these governance rules may be conveyed by a Participant, in writing, to the Steering Committee.

- (a) The Steering Committee is to consider any concerns raised with regard to the administration of these governance rules. Within twenty-one (21) days from receipt of such concern, the Steering Committee may either (i) submit its written views on the concern to the Participant raising such concern, or (ii) refer the matter to the Plenary for further consideration.
 1. If the matter is referred to the Plenary, the Participant raising the concern may submit an additional explanation of its concern to the Plenary in writing.
 2. If the matter is referred to the Plenary, the Secretariat is to prepare any additional documentation necessary to facilitate the Plenary's review.

Paragraph 4. In General – Raising Concerns Regarding Another Participant

- (a) At any time, if (a) a Participant wishes to raise concerns about another Participant and that Participant's participation in the Voluntary Principles Initiative, and (b) the Participant raising the concerns believes that the concerns are outside the scope of Section XI, Paragraphs (1-3), the Participant should raise those concerns, in writing, to the Steering Committee.
- (b) The Steering Committee is to consider any concerns raised by a Participant about another Participant and may recommend an appropriate course of action to the Plenary.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

Section XII. MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND PENALTIES FOR NON-ADHERENCE

Paragraph 1. General Expectations

- (a) All Voluntary Principles Initiative Participants are expected to adhere to the requirements set forth in these Governance Rules as well as, as applicable, the requirements of the Articles of Association of the Voluntary Principles Association.
- (b) The Participation Criteria for all Participants are set forth in Appendix 2.

Paragraph 2. Core Membership Expectations

- (a) Participants should:
 - 1. Submit Annual Reports consistent with the Participation Criteria and the Reporting Guidelines set forth in Appendices 2 and 5;
 - 2. For members of the Government and Corporate Pillars, pay annual expected contributions, as set forth in Article 7 of the Articles of Association of the Voluntary Principles Association, as applicable; and
 - 3. With the exception of Engaged Governments and Engaged NGOs, become Members of the Voluntary Principles Association.
- (b) Participants are also expected to:
 - 1. Attend the Annual Plenary Meeting and, as appropriate and commensurate with resource constraints, other sanctioned extraordinary and in-country meetings;
 - 2. Subject to legal, confidentiality, and operational concerns, respond in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information from other Participants with the aim of facilitating understanding of issues related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles; and
 - 3. Participate in direct dialogue with other Voluntary Principles Participants, as requested.

Paragraph 3. Notification of Non-Adherence

- (a) At any time, the Secretariat and/or a Participant may notify the

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

Steering Committee that a Participant is allegedly not adhering to the core expectations set forth in Section XII, Paragraph 1(b-c).

- (b) Upon receipt of such notification, the Steering Committee is to conduct a review of the Participant's adherence. If the Committee believes that the Participant is non-adherent, the Steering Committee is to notify the Participant and will request that the non-adherence be remedied within a set period of time. This notification is to be done in writing in the form of a letter from the Steering Committee to the Participant.
- (c) The Steering Committee has discretion to set specific time periods within which Participants will be expected to remedy non-adherence, with the general expectation that such time periods may range between 6-24 months depending on the nature of, and reasons for, the non-adherence.

Paragraph 4. Inactive Status

- (a) If a Participant has not remedied its non-adherence within the period of time set by the Steering Committee, and no other accommodation has been reached, the Steering Committee may recommend to the Plenary that the Participant be declared an "Inactive Participant."
- (b) Decisions to declare a Participant to be Inactive are made by the Plenary pursuant to Section III, Paragraph 3(a)(f).
- (c) Once declared Inactive, a Participant is not eligible to:
 - 1. Exercise voting rights within either the Voluntary Principles Association or the Voluntary Principles Association;
 - 2. Participate in Pillar meetings;
 - 3. Participate in Annual Plenary Meetings; and/or
 - 4. Participate in Working Groups.
- (d) An Inactive Participant that wishes to be declared an Active Participant may submit a letter to the Steering Committee setting forth the basis of its request. The Steering Committee is to distribute the request to the Plenary for a determination pursuant to Section III, Paragraph 3(a)(f).
- (e) If a Participant remains an Inactive Participant for a period of two years and has not made reasonable efforts to remedy their non-

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNANCE RULES

adherence, the Steering Committee may recommend to the Plenary that the Participant be expelled.

Paragraph 5. Expulsion

- (a) The final decision to expel a Participant is made by the Plenary. A Participant that is expelled from membership in the Voluntary Principles Association is to be expelled from the Voluntary Principles Initiative.
- (b) If the Plenary decides to expel a Participant, the Participant may reapply for membership in the Voluntary Principles Initiative after twelve (12) months, pursuant to the process through which new Participants are admitted. A Participant that is expelled is to be removed from the Voluntary Principles Initiative website.

Section XIII. DISSOLUTION

Paragraph 1. The Voluntary Principles Initiative may be dissolved by the Plenary.

Paragraph 2. Such dissolution is to be affirmatively approved by at least seventy-five percent (75%) of each Pillar.

APPENDICES

- (1) The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights**
- (2) The Participation Criteria**
- (3) Entry Frameworks for Participants**
 - 1. Framework for the Admission of New Companies**
 - 2. Framework for the Admission and Participation of New Governments**
 - 3. Framework for the Admission of New NGOs**
- (4) The Voluntary Principles Initiative Framework for the Admission of Observers**
- (5) The Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Reporting Guidelines**
 - 1. Reporting Guidelines for the Corporate Pillar**
 - 2. Reporting Guidelines for the Government Pillar**
 - 3. Reporting Guidelines for the NGO Pillar**
- (6) Selecting an Annual Plenary Host Government that is not the Government Chair**

APPENDIX 1 – THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Introduction

Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway, companies in the extractive and energy sectors (“companies”), and non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”), all with an interest in human rights and corporate social responsibility, have engaged in a dialogue on security and human rights.

The Participants recognize the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world and the constructive role business and civil society — including non-governmental organizations, labor/trade unions, and local communities — can play in advancing these goals. Through this dialogue, the Participants have developed the following set of voluntary principles to guide companies in maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Mindful of these goals, the Participants agree to the importance of continuing this dialogue and keeping under review these principles to ensure their continuing relevance and efficacy.

Acknowledging that security is a fundamental need, shared by individuals, communities, businesses, and governments alike, and acknowledging the difficult security issues faced by companies operating globally, we recognize that security and respect for human rights can and should be consistent;

Understanding that governments have the primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights and that all parties to a conflict are obliged to observe applicable international humanitarian law, we recognize that we share the common goal of promoting respect for human rights, particularly those set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international humanitarian law;

Emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the integrity of company personnel and property, companies recognize a commitment to act in a manner consistent with the laws of the countries within which they are present, to be mindful of the highest applicable international standards, and to promote the observance of applicable international law enforcement principles (e.g., the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials), particularly with regard to the use of force;

Taking note of the effect that companies' activities may have on local communities, we recognize the value of engaging with civil society and host and home governments to

contribute to the welfare of the local community while mitigating any potential for conflict where possible;

Understanding that useful, credible information is a vital component of security and human rights, we recognize the importance of sharing and understanding our respective experiences regarding, inter alia, best security practices and procedures, country human rights situations, and public and private security, subject to confidentiality constraints;

Acknowledging that home governments and multilateral institutions may, on occasion, assist host governments with security sector reform, developing institutional capacities and strengthening the rule of law, we recognize the important role companies and civil society can play in supporting these efforts;

We hereby express our support for the following voluntary principles regarding security and human rights in the extractive sector, which fall into three categories, risk assessment, relations with public security, and relations with private security:

Risk Assessment

The ability to assess accurately risks present in a company's operating environment is critical to the security of personnel, local communities and assets; the success of the company's short and long-term operations; and to the promotion and protection of human rights. In some circumstances, this is relatively simple; in others, it is important to obtain extensive background information from different sources; monitoring and adapting to changing, complex political, economic, law enforcement, military and social situations; and maintaining productive relations with local communities and government officials.

The quality of complicated risk assessments is largely dependent on the assembling of regularly updated, credible information from a broad range of perspectives — local and national governments, security firms, other companies, home governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society knowledgeable about local conditions. This information may be most effective when shared to the fullest extent possible (bearing in mind confidentiality considerations) between companies, concerned civil society, and governments.

Bearing in mind these general principles, we recognize that accurate, effective risk assessments should consider the following factors:

Identification of security risks. Security risks can result from political, economic, civil or social factors. Moreover, certain personnel and assets may be at greater risk than others. Identification of security risks allows a company to take measures to minimize risk and to assess whether company actions may heighten risk.

Potential for violence. Depending on the environment, violence can be widespread or limited to particular regions, and it can develop with little or no warning. Civil society, home and host government representatives, and other sources should be consulted to identify risks presented by the potential for violence. Risk assessments should examine patterns of violence in areas of company operations for educational, predictive, and preventative purposes.

Human rights records. Risk assessments should consider the available human rights records of public security forces, paramilitaries, local and national law enforcement, as well as the reputation of private security. Awareness of past abuses and allegations can help companies to avoid recurrences as well as to promote accountability. Also, identification of the capability of the above entities to respond to situations of violence in a lawful manner (*i.e.*, consistent with applicable international standards) allows companies to develop appropriate measures in operating environments.

Rule of law. Risk assessments should consider the local prosecuting authority and judiciary's capacity to hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses and for those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law in a manner that respects the rights of the accused.

Conflict analysis. Identification of and understanding the root causes and nature of local conflicts, as well as the level of adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law standards by key actors, can be instructive for the development of strategies for managing relations between the company, local communities, company employees and their unions, and host governments. Risk assessments should also consider the potential for future conflicts.

Equipment transfers. Where companies provide equipment (including lethal and non-lethal equipment) to public or private security, they should consider the risk of such transfers, any relevant export licensing requirements, and the feasibility of measures to mitigate foreseeable negative consequences, including adequate controls to prevent misappropriation or diversion of equipment which may lead to human rights abuses. In making risk assessments, companies should consider any relevant past incidents involving previous equipment transfers.

Interactions Between Companies and Public Security

Although governments have the primary role of maintaining law and order, security and respect for human rights, companies have an interest in ensuring that actions taken by governments, particularly the actions of public security providers, are consistent with the protection and promotion of human rights. In cases where there is a need to supplement security provided by host governments, companies may be required or expected to contribute to, or otherwise reimburse, the costs of protecting company facilities and personnel borne by public security.

While public security is expected to act in a manner consistent with local and national laws as well as with human rights standards and international humanitarian law, within this context abuses may nevertheless occur.

In an effort to reduce the risk of such abuses and to promote respect for human rights generally, we have identified the following voluntary principles to guide relationships between companies and public security regarding security provided to companies:

Security Arrangements

Companies should consult regularly with host governments and local communities about the impact of their security arrangements on those communities.

Companies should communicate their policies regarding ethical conduct and human rights to public security providers, and express their desire that security be provided in a manner consistent with those policies by personnel with adequate and effective training.

Companies should encourage host governments to permit making security arrangements transparent and accessible to the public, subject to any overriding safety and security concerns.

Deployment and Conduct

The primary role of public security should be to maintain the rule of law, including safeguarding human rights and deterring acts that threaten company personnel and facilities. The type and number of public security forces deployed should be competent, appropriate and proportional to the threat.

Equipment imports and exports should comply with all applicable law and regulations. Companies that provide equipment to public security should take all appropriate and lawful measures to mitigate any foreseeable negative consequences, including human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

Companies should use their influence to promote the following principles with public security: (a) individuals credibly implicated in human rights abuses should not provide security services for companies; (b) force should be used only when strictly necessary and to an extent proportional to the threat; and (c) the rights of individuals should not be violated while exercising the right to exercise freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the right to engage in collective bargaining, or other related rights of

company employees as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In cases where physical force is used by public security, such incidents should be reported to the appropriate authorities and to the company. Where force is used, medical aid should be provided to injured persons, including to offenders.

Consultation and Advice

Companies should hold structured meetings with public security on a regular basis to discuss security, human rights and related work-place safety issues. Companies should also consult regularly with other companies, host and home governments, and civil society to discuss security and human rights. Where companies operating in the same region have common concerns, they should consider collectively raising those concerns with the host and home governments.

In their consultations with host governments, companies should take all appropriate measures to promote observance of applicable international law enforcement principles, particularly those reflected in the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.

Companies should support efforts by governments, civil society and multilateral institutions to provide human rights training and education for public security as well as their efforts to strengthen state institutions to ensure accountability and respect for human rights.

Responses to Human Rights Abuses

Companies should record and report any credible allegations of human rights abuses by public security in their areas of operation to appropriate host government authorities. Where appropriate, companies should urge investigation and that action be taken to prevent any recurrence.

Companies should actively monitor the status of investigations and press for their proper resolution.

Companies should, to the extent reasonable, monitor the use of equipment provided by the company and to investigate properly situations in which such equipment is used in an inappropriate manner.

Every effort should be made to ensure that information used as the basis for allegations of human rights abuses is credible and based on reliable evidence. The security and safety of sources should be protected. Additional or more accurate information that

may alter previous allegations should be made available as appropriate to concerned parties.

Interactions Between Companies and Private Security

Where host governments are unable or unwilling to provide adequate security to protect a company's personnel or assets, it may be necessary to engage private security providers as a complement to public security. In this context, private security may have to coordinate with state forces, (law enforcement, in particular) to carry weapons and to consider the defensive local use of force. Given the risks associated with such activities, we recognize the following voluntary principles to guide private security conduct:

Private security should observe the policies of the contracting company regarding ethical conduct and human rights; the law and professional standards of the country in which they operate; emerging best practices developed by industry, civil society, and governments; and promote the observance of international humanitarian law.

Private security should maintain high levels of technical and professional proficiency, particularly with regard to the local use of force and firearms.

Private security should act in a lawful manner. They should exercise restraint and caution in a manner consistent with applicable international guidelines regarding the local use of force, including the UN Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, as well as with emerging best practices developed by companies, civil society, and governments.

Private security should have policies regarding appropriate conduct and the local use of force (e.g., rules of engagement). Practice under these policies should be capable of being monitored by companies or, where appropriate, by independent third parties. Such monitoring should encompass detailed investigations into allegations of abusive or unlawful acts; the availability of disciplinary measures sufficient to prevent and deter; and procedures for reporting allegations to relevant local law enforcement authorities when appropriate.

All allegations of human rights abuses by private security should be recorded. Credible allegations should be properly investigated. In those cases where allegations against private security providers are forwarded to the relevant law enforcement authorities, companies should actively monitor the status of investigations and press for their proper resolution.

Consistent with their function, private security should provide only preventative and defensive services and should not engage in activities exclusively the responsibility of

state military or law enforcement authorities. Companies should designate services, technology and equipment capable of offensive and defensive purposes as being for defensive use only.

Private security should (a) not employ individuals credibly implicated in human rights abuses to provide security services; (b) use force only when strictly necessary and to an extent proportional to the threat; and (c) not violate the rights of individuals while exercising the right to exercise freedom of association and peaceful assembly, to engage in collective bargaining, or other related rights of company employees as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In cases where physical force is used, private security should properly investigate and report the incident to the company. Private security should refer the matter to local authorities and/or take disciplinary action where appropriate. Where force is used, medical aid should be provided to injured persons, including to offenders.

Private security should maintain the confidentiality of information obtained as a result of its position as security provider, except where to do so would jeopardize the principles contained herein.

To minimize the risk that private security exceed their authority as providers of security, and to promote respect for human rights generally, we have developed the following additional voluntary principles and guidelines:

Where appropriate, companies should include the principles outlined above as contractual provisions in agreements with private security providers and ensure that private security personnel are adequately trained to respect the rights of employees and the local community. To the extent practicable, agreements between companies and private security should require investigation of unlawful or abusive behavior and appropriate disciplinary action. Agreements should also permit termination of the relationship by companies where there is credible evidence of unlawful or abusive behavior by private security personnel.

Companies should consult and monitor private security providers to ensure they fulfill their obligation to provide security in a manner consistent with the principles outlined above. Where appropriate, companies should seek to employ private security providers that are representative of the local population.

Companies should review the background of private security they intend to employ, particularly with regard to the use of excessive force. Such reviews should include an assessment of previous services provided to the host government and whether these

services raise concern about the private security firm's dual role as a private security provider and government contractor.

Companies should consult with other companies, home country officials, host country officials, and civil society regarding experiences with private security. Where appropriate and lawful, companies should facilitate the exchange of information about unlawful activity and abuses committed by private security providers.

APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

INITIATIVE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

Participants

- Governments
- Companies
- Non-Governmental Organizations

Overview

At the 2007 Annual Plenary Meeting in Washington DC, the Participation Criteria were formally adopted. The Participation Criteria articulate the responsibilities of current and future members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative; it is anticipated that the Participation Criteria will further strengthen implementation and accountability, increase the number of Voluntary Principles Initiative Participants, and encourage more robust and constructive dialogue among Participants.

Some of the key features of the Participation Criteria include: minimum requirements for participation; a dispute resolution process to raise concerns about the performance of a Participant; accountability mechanisms that include the possibility of expulsion; and more transparent procedures for accepting new members.

Additionally, the criteria enshrine a commitment by Participants to report publicly on their implementation of, and/or their assistance in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

Voluntary Principles Participation Criteria

Participants confirm that the core objective of the Voluntary Principles is to “guide companies in maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for Human Rights and fundamental freedoms.” Participants acknowledge that engagement and dialogue among the Participants are central to reaching this objective.

To facilitate the goals of the Voluntary Principles and encourage full and open dialogue, Participants confirm that all proceedings of the Voluntary Principles process are on a nonattribution and non-quotation basis and no distribution of documents to non-Participants is

permitted except as required by valid legal process or otherwise required by law.¹

All Participants are expected to meet the following criteria:

1. Publicly promote the Voluntary Principles;
2. Proactively implement or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles;
3. Attend the Annual Plenary Meeting and, as appropriate and commensurate with resource constraints, other sanctioned extraordinary and in-country meetings;
4. Communicate publicly, at least annually, on efforts to implement or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles;
5. Prepare and submit to the Steering Committee, one month prior to the Annual Plenary Meeting, an Annual Report on efforts to implement or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles according to criteria determined by the Participants;
6. Participate in dialogue with other Voluntary Principles Participants;
7. Subject to legal, confidentiality, safety, and operational concerns, provide timely responses to reasonable requests for information from other Participants with the aim of facilitating comprehensive understanding of the issues related to implementation or assistance in implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

Dispute Resolution Process:

- Pursuant to their participation in the Voluntary Principles Initiative, Participants may raise concerns in good faith regarding another Participant's sustained lack of efforts to implement or assist in implementing the Voluntary Principles.²
- Before raising concerns to the Steering Committee, Participants should seek first to resolve any concerns through dialogue conducted directly and in good faith with another Participant.

¹As stated in Appendix 4, Observers are required to sign a statement acknowledging the confidentiality expectations that all Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative are expected to follow, as set forth in the Participation Criteria.

² Guidance on the expectations for Participants may be found in each Pillar's Roles and Responsibilities document.

- In raising concerns with regard to another Participant’s activities, the ultimate goal should be to strengthen, through constructive engagement, individual and collective efforts to implement or assist in implementing the Voluntary Principles and to ensure the integrity of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Submitting a Grievance to the Steering Committee

- The process for considering and resolving such grievances is as follows:
 - If dialogue conducted directly and in good faith between Participants fails to result in an acceptable resolution, a Participant may submit its concerns to the Steering Committee. A written statement of the concerns should be submitted to the Steering Committee through the Secretariat.
 - The Steering Committee is to immediately notify the Participant(s) about whom concerns have been raised in the written submission that a grievance has been formally submitted. The Participant(s) are to be given the option of providing a written response within thirty (30) days. This response should be submitted to the Steering Committee or the Secretariat. A copy is to then be provided to the Participant who filed the grievance.
 - Documents submitted and prepared as part of the grievance process are to be maintained by the Secretariat. Any Participant in the Voluntary Principles Initiative may request to review these documents, subject to the provision that all documents are subject to the requirement of confidentiality set forth in this document.
 - At its discretion, the Steering Committee may choose to invite representatives of the Participants involved in the grievance process to participate in a Steering Committee meeting for the purposes of clarifying Participants’ concerns and/or ensuring that those concerns are based on reliable information and raised in good faith. The Participants are not to otherwise participate in decisions by the Steering Committee regarding appropriate actions under this grievance process.
 - If a grievance is raised by, or about, a Participant that is a member of the Steering Committee, that Participant is not to participate in discussion of, or decision-making regarding, the grievance except as detailed above.

If determined by the Steering Committee that the concerns raised by a Participant are based on reliable information and that the Voluntary Principles Initiative would be strengthened by further consultations, the matter is to be referred to the Secretariat within sixty (60) days of its submission to the Steering Committee. In the event concerns are raised about more than one Participant, the decisions with respect to each Participant are to be reached separately.

Formal Consultations by the Secretariat

- Upon referral by the Steering Committee, the Secretariat is to facilitate formal consultations between the Participants directly involved in a specific grievance, subject to the requirement of confidentiality set forth in this document and any other conditions as established by the Steering Committee or as agreed upon by the involved Participants.
 - If one or more Participants in the grievance process have reason to believe that a party other than the Secretariat should facilitate the consultation, they should raise that concern with the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee should either recommend steps to mitigate the expressed concern or direct the Participants to work to identify and agree on a third party facilitator. If the Participants cannot agree on a facilitator, the Steering Committee is to identify an appropriate third party, in consultation with the parties.
- These formal consultations are expected to take no longer than six (6) months, absent agreement by the Participants directly involved.
- The Secretariat is to work with the Participants to develop a written consultation plan which may include: the specific issues to be addressed during the consultations; a schedule for meetings (by phone or in person); the identities of the representatives of each Participant who are to participate in the meetings; mutual expectations on the duration of the consultation; and an understanding regarding whether individuals or organizations that are not parties to the grievance are to be allowed to participate in the consultation process.
 - If the involved Participants are unable to agree on any aspect of a consultation plan, the matter may be referred back to the Steering Committee for its recommendation on how to proceed.
- A copy of the consultation plan is to be provided to the Steering Committee and the Secretariat is to provide regular updates to the Steering Committee on the consultation

process. If requested by the Steering Committee, and as appropriate, the Secretariat is to also produce a final report summarizing the consultation process and its outcomes.

- If the Participants are able to reach a resolution, a document regarding that resolution is to be drafted and presented to the Steering Committee in a timely manner. The Steering Committee is to maintain a copy of the document and check in periodically in an effort to ensure that the Participants are following through with any commitments that they have made.
- Unless one of the Participant involved in the consultation objects, the Corporate and/or Government Pillar members directly involved in the grievance process are expected to pay for the Secretariat and/or third-party facilitator services required. If a Participant objects, the Steering Committee will work with the Participants to identify appropriate sources of funding.

Presentation to, and Determination by, the Plenary

- To the extent desired by one or more of the Participants directly involved in a grievance process, and irrespective of the outcome of the consultation process, Participant(s) may present the matter to the Plenary at the following Annual or Extraordinary Plenary Meeting.
 - A Participant may present the matter to the Plenary without the express approval of the other Participant(s) involved in the grievance process. Whether or not approval is provided, the Participant presenting the matter to the Plenary should endeavor to provide the other Participant(s) involved in the process with a copy of the presentation to be made at least two weeks before the presentation.
- The Plenary is to decide what, if any, further action is appropriate to strengthen and/or support implementation of the Voluntary Principles, and protect the integrity of the Voluntary Principles Initiative. In the event concerns are raised about more than one Participant, the decisions with respect to each Participant are to be reached separately.
 - Plenary decision-making is to be made pursuant to Section III, Paragraph 3(a)2.
 - Plenary determinations on further action(s) to be taken by Participants, and the expected time frames within which such actions should be taken, are to be memorialized in writing. The Secretariat is to prepare and provide appropriate

documentation of the Plenary's determination for the Participants and the Steering Committee within two weeks after the determination has been made.

- While the Plenary has wide discretion to consider appropriate actions, among those the Plenary may consider are whether a Participant should be declared inactive or expelled from the Initiative.
 - A decision to declare a Participant inactive will have an effect consistent with Section XII(c).
- If the Plenary decides to expel a Participant, the Participant may reapply for membership in the Voluntary Principles Initiative after twelve (12) months, pursuant to the process through which new Participants are admitted. A Participant that is expelled is to be removed from the Voluntary Principles Initiative website.

Status Review following Plenary Decision

- Following a Plenary decision, one or more of the interested Participants may request that the Steering Committee conduct a status review of a Participant's efforts to implement the Plenary's identified actions.
 - If the Steering Committee determines that a Participant has materially failed to implement the identified actions over a reasonable time period, the Plenary may declare the Participant inactive at an Annual or Extraordinary Plenary Meeting.
- A Participant declared inactive by the Plenary may request a review to determine whether some or all of the actions identified by the Plenary have been fulfilled or completed. The Steering Committee, at its own discretion, may also initiate this review. The Steering Committee is to report back to the Plenary on its conclusions regarding any review that is undertaken, for further decisions by the Plenary as appropriate.
- If a Participant has been inactive for a period of twenty-four (24) months, the Plenary may conduct a status review to determine whether a decision should be made to expel the Participant or whether any alternative action should be taken.

Note on Disputes

- To facilitate the goals of the Voluntary Principles and to encourage full and open dialogue, Participants acknowledge that implementation of the Principles is continuously evolving and affirm that the Voluntary Principles do not create legally binding standards and participation

in, communications concerning, and alleged failures to abide by the Voluntary Principles are not to be used to support a claim in any legal or administrative proceeding against a Participant. This does not preclude any Participant from criticizing the conduct of any other Participant, publicly or privately, subject to the requirement of confidentiality set forth in this document.

APPENDIX 3.1 – FRAMEWORK FOR THE ADMISSION OF NEW COMPANIES

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE AND THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATION

FRAMEWORK FOR ADMISSION OF NEW COMPANIES

Governments, companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, and non-government organizations (“NGOs”), all with an interest in human rights and corporate social responsibility, have engaged in a dialogue on security and human rights. Participants in the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles Initiative” or “VPI”) recognize the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world and the constructive role business and civil society – NGOs, labor/trade unions and local communities – can play in advancing these goals.

This document sets forth the process by which companies may apply to become Participants in the VPI. It also provides information as to the expectations for Applicant Companies and Participant Companies in the VPI.

1. Admissions Process

Initial Application³

- 1.1 Any company in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy (hereinafter referred to as “Applicant Company”) may formally request admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative (“VPI”) and the Voluntary Principles Association (“VPA”).⁴

³ Prior to submitting an application, or while an application is pending, any company is welcome to request an invitation to attend the Voluntary Principles Annual Plenary Meeting as an Invited Guest of the Steering Committee. Requests should be submitted to voluntaryprinciples@foleyhoag.com.

⁴ The VPA is an entity based in The Netherlands that addresses the administrative and financial needs of the VPI. The activities of the VPA are governed by its Articles of Association (available upon request). Formally, the General Meeting of the VPA decides on the admission to membership in the Association. The General Meeting is the same body as the Plenary of the VPI and Applicant Companies are informally admitted to the VPA once they are admitted to the VPI as Participant Companies in accordance with the procedures described in this document. Formal admission takes place at the next Annual General Meeting of the VPA, held at the same time as the Annual Plenary Meeting of the VPI.

- 1.2 The request for application is to be made in writing to the Secretariat using the Application and Action Plan Form (Annex A).⁵
- 1.3 Upon receipt of an application, the Secretariat will transmit the application to the Steering Committee of the VPI for its review, in consultation with the Plenary.

Consideration of Application

- 1.4 The Steering Committee, in consultation with the Plenary, will make every effort to review applications in an expeditious manner. Applicant Companies should be aware that the review process typically takes several months to complete. At any point during the review period, the Applicant Company may contact the Secretariat to check on the status of an application.
- 1.5 The Steering Committee's review of an application will include: a review of the company's action plan; consideration of publicly available information regarding the company's activities; and an assessment of the company's capacity to operate in a manner consistent with responsibilities described in the Entry Criteria set forth below.
- 1.6 During its review of an application, the Steering Committee may direct the Secretariat to convey specific additional questions to an Applicant Company and/or to set up a call or meeting to discuss particular aspects of the application. These questions and/or discussions will be limited to and focused on an evaluation of the considerations identified in the Entry Criteria. Members of the Steering Committee agree to complete the application review in as efficient a manner as practicable

Approval or Rejection of Application

- 1.7 The approval or rejection of the application is communicated to the Secretariat by the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat will advise the Applicant Company of the decision.

Potential Reconsideration

⁵ Materials may be electronically submitted to voluntaryprinciples@foleyhoag.com. Hard copies are not required, but may be submitted to: Secretariat, Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, Foley Hoag LLP, ATTN: Gare Smith, 1717 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

- 1.8 If an application has been rejected, the Applicant Company may request reconsideration. This request should be submitted in writing to the Secretariat which will transmit the request to the Steering Committee for its review, in consultation with the Plenary.
- 1.9 During its review of a request for reconsideration, the Steering Committee may choose to enter into dialogue with an Applicant Company, taking into consideration arguments brought forward by the Applicant. The Secretariat will contact the Applicant Company to initiate such discussions at the Steering Committee's request.
- 1.10 An Applicant Company that is not admitted under the terms set forth in Sections 1.8-1.9 may at any time submit a renewed request for admission.

2. Entry Criteria

- 2.1 To be considered for entry, Applicant Company is expected to submit an Action Plan (Annex A).
- 2.2 Applicant Company commits to proactively implement and/or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and to operating consistently with the documents and requirements listed in Annex B.
- 2.3 Applicant Company recognizes a responsibility to maintain the safety and security of its operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to act in a manner consistent with the laws of the countries within which they are present, to be mindful of the highest applicable international standards (e.g. the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights), and to promote the observance of applicable international law enforcement principles (e.g. the U.N. Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the U.N. Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials), particularly with regard to the use of force, and as it relates to security and companies engaged in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy.

3. Corporate Pillar Participants

- 3.1 Participant Companies are inter alia:
 - a) Eligible to participate fully in all aspects of the Voluntary Principles Initiative and the Voluntary Principles Association, including governance and other decision-making forums; and

- b) Expected to fulfil the roles and responsibilities described in the Participation Criteria and the *Roles and Responsibilities of Companies* document.
- c) Encouraged to implement the *Corporate Pillar Verification Framework* and expected to note whether the Participant Company will opt-in at the time of admission.

ANNEX A: COMPANY APPLICATION AND ACTION PLAN

General information

1. Name of company
2. Name, department and job title of primary contact person
3. Address of headquarters

Participation in a Multi-Stakeholder Initiative

4. Discuss the company's decision to apply to the join the VPI. What is the company's motivation for applying to join the Initiative? Why is now the right time for the company to join? What factors lead to the decision to apply? What does the company hope to gain from participation in the Initiative?

Existing Implementation of Security and Human Rights Commitments

Please provide examples of how the company already implements, or supports implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

5. Describe company policies, codes of conduct, grievance mechanisms, and other processes and procedures that you have in place, or plan to put in place, with regard to security and human rights. If available, provide concrete examples of how your company currently implements security and human rights principles and/or practices in your operations.
6. Describe how the company currently assesses its performance with regard to security and human rights, including the use of internal and independent assurance processes (if any).
7. Describe the company's public reporting processes (e.g. sustainability reporting) currently in place.
8. Provide information on how the company already cooperates with existing Voluntary Principles Participants on security and human rights issues. Specify which countries and which companies, governments, or NGOs the company cooperates with.
9. Discuss the company's response to previous security and human rights challenges, if any. What lessons did the company learn and apply?

Action Plan for Implementation of the Voluntary Principles

10. List the countries in which implementation of the Voluntary Principles is of particular interest or relevance to the company. Explain what type of presence (e.g. operating company, joint venture, minority investor, etc.) the company has in the countries identified.
11. Explain how the company would contribute to implementation / support of implementation and advancement of the Voluntary Principles if it became a Participant. Please indicate whether your response relates to company, country, and/or global levels, and also include an indicative timeframe.
12. Explain how the Voluntary Principles will enhance or assist the current efforts of the company and/or future plans.

Additional Information

13. Discuss how the company's commitment to accountability and transparency with regard to its security and human rights commitments (e.g., public reporting, grievance mechanisms, dialogues with key stakeholders).
14. Please attach any additional information that might help in the consideration of the company's application (e.g., relevant extracts from your Annual Reports or CSR reports).

ANNEX B: KEY DOCUMENT LIST

- The Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Governance Rules
- [The Roles and Responsibilities of Companies](#)
- [Corporate Pillar Verification Framework⁶](#)

⁶ Upon admission, Participant Companies should state whether they intend to “opt in” to the Verification Framework.

APPENDIX 3.2 – FRAMEWORK FOR THE ADMISSION OF NEW GOVERNMENTS

Governments, companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, and non-government organizations (“NGOs”), all with an interest in human rights and corporate social responsibility, have engaged in a dialogue on security and human rights. Participants in the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (the “Voluntary Principles Initiative” or “VPI”) recognize the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world and the constructive role business and civil society – NGOs, labor/trade unions and local communities – can play in advancing these goals.

This document sets forth the process by which Governments may apply to become Participants in the VPI. It also provides information as to the expectations for Applicant Governments and Government Participants in the VPI.

1. Admissions Process

Initial Application⁷

- 1.1 Any Government (hereinafter referred to as “Applicant Government”) may formally request admission to the VPI and the Voluntary Principles Association (“VPA”)⁸ as an Engaged Government.
- 1.2 This request is to be made through the submission of a Letter of Intent (as outlined in Annex A) to the Secretariat and should include a statement of the Applicant Government’s commitment to the Voluntary Principles.⁹
- 1.3 Upon receipt of an application, the Secretariat will transmit the application to the Steering Committee of the VPI for its review, in consultation with the Plenary.

⁷ Prior to submitting an application, or while an application is pending, any Government is welcome to request an invitation to attend the Voluntary Principles Annual Plenary Meeting as an Invited Guest of the Steering Committee. Requests should be submitted to voluntaryprinciples@foleyhoag.com.

⁸ The VPA is an entity based in The Netherlands that addresses the administrative and financial needs of the VPI. The activities of and applications for membership in the VPA are governed by the Articles of Association of the VPA (available upon request). Formally, the General Meeting of the VPA decides on the admission to membership in the Association. The General Meeting is the same body as the Plenary of the VPI and Applicant Governments are informally admitted to the VPA once they are admitted to the VPI as Participant Governments in accordance with the procedures described in this document. Formal admission takes place at the next Annual General Meeting of the VPA, held at the same time as the Annual Plenary Meeting of the VPI.

⁹ Materials may be electronically submitted to voluntaryprinciples@foleyhoag.com. Hard copies are not required, but may be submitted to: Secretariat, Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, Foley Hoag LLP, ATTN: Gare Smith, 1717 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Consideration of Application

- 1.4 The Steering Committee, in consultation with the Plenary, will make every effort to review applications in an expeditious manner. Applicant Governments should be aware that the review process typically takes several months to complete. At any point during the review period, the Applicant Government may contact the Secretariat to check on the status of an application.
- 1.5 The Steering Committee's review of an application will include an assessment of the Government's capacity to operate in a manner consistent with responsibilities described in the Entry Criteria set forth below.
- 1.6 During its review of an application, the Steering Committee may direct the Secretariat to convey specific additional questions to an Applicant Government and/or to set up a call or meeting to discuss particular aspects of the application. These questions and/or discussions will be limited to and focused on an evaluation of the considerations identified in the Entry Criteria. Members of the Steering Committee agree to complete the application review in as efficient a manner as practicable

Approval or Rejection of Application

- 1.7 The approval or rejection of the application is communicated to the Secretariat through the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat will advise the Applicant Government of the decision.

Potential Reconsideration

- 1.8 If an application has been rejected, the Applicant Government may request reconsideration. This request should be submitted in writing to the Secretariat which will transmit the request to the Steering Committee for its review, in consultation with the Plenary.
- 1.9 During its review of a request for reconsideration, the Steering Committee may choose to enter into dialogue with an Applicant Government, taking into consideration arguments brought forward by the Applicant. The Secretariat will contact the Applicant Government to initiate such discussions at the Steering Committee's request.
- 1.10 An Applicant Government that is not admitted under the terms set forth in Sections 1.9-1.10 may at any time submit a renewed request for admission.

2. Entry Criteria

- 2.1 An Applicant Government commits to proactively implement and/or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and to operating consistently with the documents and requirements listed in Annex C.

3. Engaged Governments

Status

- 3.1 Applicant Governments are initially admitted to the VPI as Engaged Governments.¹⁰
- 3.2 Engaged Governments may inter alia:
- a) Attend and contribute to events organized by the VPI, including appropriate sessions at the Voluntary Principles Annual Plenary Meeting,
 - b) Seek advice and support from the Secretariat for Voluntary Principles-recognized activities,
 - c) Contribute to discussions regarding implementation of the Voluntary Principles, including sharing of experiences and best practices.
- 3.3 Engaged Governments are expected to:
- d) pay a percentage equal to one half of the costs attributed to a Participant during their first year of Engaged Government status. The Government is expected to share in the costs as a Participant thereafter. A Government's inability to share in any of the costs would be addressed on a case by case basis.
 - e) produce an Annual Report consistent with the Voluntary Principles Initiative Reporting Guidelines.
- 3.4 An Engaged Government's status may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the application process terminated by the Steering Committee, in consultation with the

¹⁰ The status of "Engaged Government" applies irrespective of whether the Government is home or host to companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, a combination of such or is a Government without such affiliations.

Plenary, if the Engaged Government is not abiding by the commitments it made upon joining the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

- a) An Engaged Government excluded under the terms set forth in Section 3.4 may at any time submit a renewed request for admission.

3.5 Engaged Governments are not Members of the VPA, but are allowed to participate in VPA meetings and events, unless participation is specifically restricted to VPA Members.

4. Requesting Status as a Participant Government

Development of a National Plan

- 4.1 Engaged Governments may at any time request the Steering Committee to initiate a process enabling them to gain status as Participant Governments within the VPI and the VPA.
- 4.2 Such a process would require that the Engaged Government develops and implements a National Plan (hereinafter: “the Plan”) consistent with the framework set out in Annex B. The Plan is to focus on steps to promote security and human rights in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy in the Engaged Government’s country and should incorporate consideration of the roles and responsibilities outlined in the *Roles and Responsibilities of Governments* document.
- 4.3 Engaged Governments should, on a quarterly basis, update the Steering Committee on progress of their drafting of the Plan.
- 4.4 Engaged Governments should make every effort to submit the Plan within 18 months of becoming an Engaged Government. However, some flexibility may be required in this transition period as governments will be required to provide a large amount of information in the Plan. If a Plan is not submitted within 18 months, the Steering Committee and Secretariat should work with the Engaged Government to ensure that a Plan is submitted within 6 months after the end of the 18-month period.

Review of the Plan

- 4.5 For a period of one (1) month following submission of the Plan, the Steering Committee should review the Plan and work to clarify issues related to the Plan with the Engaged Government. If ongoing collaborative work (between the Steering Committee and the Engaged Government) is needed, the Steering Committee

should inform the Engaged Government, set a new timeline and work with the Government to address outstanding issues in a timely fashion.

Approval of National Action Plan

- 4.6 If an Engaged Government's National Action Plan is approved by the Steering Committee, in consultation with the Plenary, the Secretariat will inform the Engaged Government that it has gained status as a Participant Government.¹¹
- 4.7 If an Engaged Government's National Action Plan is not approved by the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee will give recommendations to the Engaged Government on how best to improve its National Action Plan. Every effort will be made to work with the Engaged Government in order to enhance its National Action Plan with goal that it will ultimately be approved.
- 4.8 The Steering Committee is to indicate a time-frame for the Government's reporting to the Steering Committee on progress in implementing the Plan. As necessary, the Steering Committee may recommend assessments in order to determine the level of progress by the Government. This may include organizing an in-country review mission consisting of a group of Voluntary Principles Participants.

5. Participant Governments

- 5.1 Participant Governments are inter alia:
- a) Eligible to participate fully in all aspects of the Voluntary Principles Initiative and the Voluntary Principles Association, including governance and other decision-making forums; and
 - b) Expected to operate consistently with Governance Rules for the Voluntary Principles Initiative, including, but not limited to the Participation Criteria, the *Roles and Responsibilities of Governments* document, and the *Government Pillar Verification Framework*.

¹¹ The status of "Participant Government" applies irrespective of whether the Government is home or host to companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, a combination of such or is a Government without such affiliations.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE: Becoming an Engaged Government

Annex A - The Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent may include (but is not limited to) incorporating the following elements:

Express interest in joining the Voluntary Principles Initiative:

- Describe your commitment to adhering to the Voluntary Principles.
- Identify what ministry will manage the Voluntary Principles, as well as any other ministries and/or bureaus which may contribute and/or have a stake in implementing the Voluntary Principles.
- Discuss the Government's decision to apply to the join the VPI. What factors lead to the decision to apply? What does the Government hope to gain from participation in the Initiative?

Describe and identify experience with companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy:

- Include information outlining the number of transnational and/or national companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy operating in your country.
- Identify the size of related components in terms of numbers of companies (both home and transnational for which your country is host), size(s) of companies, and estimated fiduciary investments.
- Cite national and/or transnational companies with operations in the country that work efficiently and effectively as well as those who have faced or are facing challenges.
- Identify experience(s) with transnational and/or national companies operating in areas of armed conflict and/or areas where significant security operations pose risks of human rights abuse.
- Identify what Government entities (at the federal, state/department, and local/municipal levels) have responsibilities for providing security for the operations of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy.
- Explain how the Government regulates private security companies (if at all).

Describe how the Voluntary Principles may be of Assistance to Your Country's Efforts:

- Distinguish ways in which your country could both contribute to and learn from the Voluntary Principles and participate in the multi-stakeholder approach of the VPI.
- Explain how the VPI multi-stakeholder forum could help identify practical guidelines and build upon best practices for your Government.

- Explain how the Government can contribute to the knowledge-base on issues related to the intersection of security and human rights and provide its own unique perspective. Cite examples when possible.

Highlight what your government is currently doing that relates to the Voluntary Principles:

- Cite specific interest in, or current experience your country has undertaken that involves the Voluntary Principles.
- Identify past and existing efforts to train, vet, and oversee public and/or private security forces domestically.
- Identify and cite examples of what your Government is doing on its own, with businesses, and with members of civil society to collaborate and work on multi-stakeholder initiatives to discuss issues of human rights. (Examples are holding monthly multi-stakeholder roundtables, administering training, developing national legislation etc...)
- Explain how current or future initiatives may be forming the beginning of an in-country action plan for addressing security and human rights in the context of the operations of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy.
- Describe how participating in, or being members of, other initiatives (such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, the Association for the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers, etc.) may work in tandem with your Government's participation in the VPI.

Commitment to business & human rights initiatives:

- Share how your Government will raise international awareness and standards for the Voluntary Principles and contribute to improving human rights.
- Describe your commitment to the Voluntary Principles to help reduce the risk of human rights abuses in connection with the operations of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, specifically in volatile zones.
- Explain why the Voluntary Principles are beneficial to the interests of your Government and the national and transnational companies within your country.
- Share ideas for future initiatives to implement the Voluntary Principles in your country.
- Indicate your initial thoughts and/or examples on what may be included in your national action plan.
- Identify companies in your country that are already Voluntary Principles members, and describe how you can work with them to promote the Voluntary Principles.
- Share regional dynamics and issues around security and human rights and identify ways in which joining the Voluntary Principles can help alleviate or proactively address these issues.

- Share how your Government seeks to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the context of the operations of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy. .
- Share how the Voluntary Principles relates to your Government's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, as applicable.

Please identify the department where the Voluntary Principles will be managed and the points of contact.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE: Becoming a Participant Government

Annex B - National Plan

Elements of the Plan

The Plan should outline the steps the government plans to take to promote and implement the Voluntary Principles. The Plan should include a road map that sets out clear objectives, a plan of activities and a timetable for promotion and implementation. The Plan should be developed by the Engaged Government in consultation with, and drawing on input, from relevant government agencies (e.g. commerce, defense, justice, energy, and economic issues). The Government should also consult with local companies, civil society, and embassies and missions of VPI Participant Governments. Consultations should continue on promoting and implementing the Voluntary Principles even when a country achieves Participant Government status.

The Plan should include details of how the Engaged Government intends to:

- a. demonstrate commitment to and implement the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights both domestically and overseas;
- b. promote the Voluntary Principles and encourage companies, NGOs and other governments to join the Voluntary Principles Initiative and implement the Voluntary Principles;

Examples of potential activities designed to promote and implement the Voluntary Principles include regular multi-stakeholder roundtables; establishing interdepartmental Voluntary Principles promotion strategies; demarches; administering training; developing national legislation; joint Government-Corporate-NGO outreach; presentations at international fora.

The Plan might also include:

1. details of appropriate laws, regulations, policies, and/or procedures which are designed to ensure that actions of public or private security providers are consistent with applicable international law and humanitarian law, or provide details of what steps will be taken to enact such laws, regulations and policies. This could include human rights training and education for security providers;
2. details on how the Government intends to promote the observance of applicable international law enforcement principles, particularly with regard to the use of force;

3. an explanation of the Government's efforts to ensure accountability and respect for human rights and to mitigate human rights abuses. The Government could also detail how it holds perpetrators accountable by taking actions including investigating, prosecuting, and/or other measures that effectively address human rights abuses or prevent them.

Annex C – Key Document List

- The Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Governance Rules
- [The Roles and Responsibilities of Governments](#)
- [The Government Pillar Verification Framework](#)

APPENDIX 3.3 – FRAMEWORK FOR THE ADMISSION OF NEW NGOS

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE AND THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATION

FRAMEWORK FOR ADMISSION OF NEW NGOS

Governments, companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, and non-government organizations (“NGOs”), all with an interest in human rights and corporate social responsibility, have engaged in a dialogue on security and human rights. Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative (“VPI”) recognize the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world and the constructive role business and civil society – NGOs, labor/trade unions and local communities – can play in advancing these goals.

This document sets forth the process by which NGOs may apply to become Participants in the VPI. It also provides information as to the expectations for Applicant NGOs and NGO Participants in the VPI.

6. Admissions Process

Initial Application¹²

- 1.11 Any NGO (hereinafter referred to as “Applicant NGO”) may formally request admission to the VPI and the Voluntary Principles Association (“VPA”)¹³ as an Engaged NGO.
- 1.12 The request is made in writing at any time to the Secretariat and is to include a statement of the Applicant NGO’s commitment to the Voluntary Principles and

¹² Prior to submitting an application, or while an application is pending, any NGO is welcome to request an invitation to attend the Voluntary Principles Annual Plenary Meeting as an Invited Guest of the Steering Committee. Requests should be submitted to voluntaryprinciples@foleyhoag.com.

¹³ The VPA is an entity based in The Netherlands that addresses the administrative and financial needs of the VPI. The activities of and applications for membership in the VPA are governed by the Articles of Association of the VPA (available upon request). Formally, the General Meeting of the VPA decides on the admission to membership in the Association. The General Meeting is the same body as the Plenary of the VPI and Applicant NGOs are informally admitted to the VPA once they are admitted to the VPI as Participant NGOs in accordance with the procedures described in this document. Formal admission takes place at the next Annual General Meeting of the VPA, held at the same time as the Annual Plenary Meeting of the VPI.

describe the activities they undertake or plan to undertake relevant to the Voluntary Principles.¹⁴

- 1.13 Upon receipt of an application, the Secretariat will transmit the application to the Steering Committee of the VPI for its review, in consultation with the Plenary.

Consideration of Application

- 1.14 The Steering Committee, in consultation with the Plenary, will make every effort to review applications in an expeditious manner. Applicant NGOs should be aware that the review process typically takes several months to complete. At any point during the review period, the Applicant NGO may contact the Secretariat to check on the status of an application.
- 1.15 The Steering Committee's review of an application will include an assessment of the NGO's capacity to operate in a manner consistent with responsibilities described in the Entry Criteria set forth below.
- 1.16 During its review of an application, the Steering Committee may direct the Secretariat to convey specific additional questions to an Applicant NGO and/or to set up a call or meeting to discuss particular aspects of the application. These questions and/or discussions will be limited to and focused on an evaluation of the considerations identified in the Entry Criteria. Members of the Steering Committee agree to complete the application review in as efficient a manner as practicable

Approval or Rejection of Application

- 1.17 The approval or rejection of the application is communicated to the Secretariat by the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat will advise the Applicant NGO of the decision.

Potential Reconsideration

- 1.18 If an application has been rejected, the Applicant NGO may request reconsideration. This request should be submitted in writing to the Secretariat which will transmit the request to the Steering Committee for its review, in consultation with the Plenary.

¹⁴ Materials may be electronically submitted to voluntaryprinciples@foleyhoag.com. Hard copies are not required, but may be submitted to: Secretariat, Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, Foley Hoag LLP, ATTN: Gare Smith, 1717 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

- 1.19 During its review of a request for reconsideration, the Steering Committee may choose to enter into dialogue with an Applicant NGO, taking into consideration arguments brought forward by the Applicant. The Secretariat will contact the Applicant Company to initiate such discussions at the Steering Committee's request.
- 1.20 An Applicant NGO that is not admitted under the terms set forth in Sections 1.8-1.9 may at any time submit a renewed request for admission.

7. Entry Criteria

- 7.1 An Applicant NGO commits to proactively implement and/or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and to operating consistently with the documents and requirements listed in Annex A.
- 7.2 An Applicant NGO should:
- a) Have an established record and reputation for the promotion of respect for human rights and/or promotion of human security/peace.
 - b) Demonstrate formal commitment to sustained and public promotion of the Voluntary Principles.
 - c) Be willing and capable to contribute to the international Voluntary Principles process; if based in a host country, willing and capable to contribute to national in-country process.
 - d) Be independent and should not be compromised in its ability to defend the rights and interests of victims of violence and human rights violations and to contribute to holding accountable Corporate and Government Participants because of financial or other relationships with VPI Participants or otherwise. The structure and governing rules of the organization should guarantee the not-for-profit nature of the NGO and its ability to act independently.

8. Engaged NGOs

Status

- 8.1 Applicant NGOs are first admitted to the VPI as Engaged NGOs.¹⁵

¹⁵ The status of "Engaged NGO" applies irrespective of whether the NGO is an international- or national-level NGO.

- 8.2 An Engaged NGO is able to participate in proceedings of the VPI for a one-year term, with an option to extend at the discretion of the Plenary.
- a) An Engaged NGO's term officially begins on the date that its request is approved. Terms that are due to expire, however, will be automatically extended until the next Annual Plenary Meeting.
- 8.3 Each year, if it has not yet applied to become a Participant NGO, an Engaged NGO must submit a letter to the Steering Committee requesting renewal of its status as an Engaged NGO within the VPI.
- a) The letter should specifically request renewal of the organization's participation within the VPI with an explanation of efforts made during the previous year to promote and/or to assist in Voluntary Principles implementation. The letter should also provide information regarding the organization's intentions to promote and/or to assist in Voluntary Principles implementation during the following year.
 - b) The Steering Committee makes a recommendation to the Plenary regarding the extension of each Engaged NGO's term for an additional year.
 - c) At the Annual Plenary Meeting, the Plenary reviews and votes on the proposed renewals.

Expectations

- 8.4 Engaged NGOs may inter alia:
- a) Attend and contribute to events organized by the VPI, including Annual and Extraordinary Plenary Meetings, except in instances when such meetings are specifically restricted to Participants;
 - b) Participate in Working Groups of the VPI;
 - c) Seek advice and support from the Secretariat for activities recognized by the VPI; and
 - d) Contribute to discussions regarding implementation of the Voluntary Principles, including sharing of experiences and best practices.
- 8.5 Engaged NGOs may not:
- a) Exercise voting rights within the VPI; and

- b) Participate in meetings of the NGO Pillar, unless such meetings are specifically restricted to full NGO Participants.

8.6 Engaged NGOs are not expected to submit annual reports to the Plenary.

8.7 Engaged NGOs are not Members of the VPA but are allowed to participate in VPA meetings and events, unless participation is specifically restricted to VPA Members.

9. Requesting Status as a NGO Participant

9.1 After a period of one year, an Engaged NGO may request status as a NGO Participant within the VPI and VPA. The status of “NGO Participant” applies irrespective of whether the NGO is an international- or national-level NGO.

- a) In exceptional circumstances, an Engaged NGO may make a special request to the Steering Committee to become an NGO Participant prior to end of the one-year term. Such a request must be made in writing to the Steering Committee and should provide justification for why the Engaged NGO wishes to convert its current status before the end of the one-year requirement.

9.2 If an Engaged NGO has not requested full NGO Participant status after three years of participation in the VPI, its membership in the VPI will not be renewed except by special request and at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

- a) An Engaged NGO may make a special request to the Steering Committee to retain its Engaged NGO status for a period that exceeds the three year limit. Such a request must be made in writing to the Steering Committee and should provide justification for why the Engaged NGO wishes to retain its status and not seek to become a NGO Participant.

9.3 To request status as an NGO Participant, an Engaged NGO must submit a letter to the Steering Committee setting forth:

- a) The NGO’s reasons for requesting a change in status;
- b) An explanation of why a change in status would allow the organization to better contribute to the VPI;
- c) An outline of how the NGO would contribute to the VPI, including its commitments to participate in the committees and Working Groups of the VPI, and/or to assisting with outreach and implementation programs related to the Voluntary Principles;

- d) A demonstration of the NGO's recent history of commitment to promote and/or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and/or disseminate the Voluntary Principles among relevant stakeholder groups.

9.4 An Engaged NGO's request to become a NGO Participant within the VPI will be reviewed by the Steering Committee in accordance with the procedure set forth in Sections 1.4 - 1.9.¹⁶

10. NGO Participants

10.1 NGO Participants are inter alia:

- c) Eligible to participate fully in all aspects of the Voluntary Principles Initiative and the Voluntary Principles Association, including governance and other decision-making forums; and
- d) Expected to operate consistently with Governance Rules for the Voluntary Principles Initiative, including, but not limited to the Participation Criteria, the *Roles and Responsibilities of NGOs* document, and the *NGO Pillar Verification Framework*.
- e) Required to recuse themselves from any voting in regards to a fellow participant that they have a financial or material relationship with that is relevant to the Voluntary Principles; and
- f) Required to disclose all sources and amounts of income, with details on the purpose of funds for those from other Participants in the VPI.

¹⁶ Formally, the General Meeting of the VPA decides on the admission to membership in the Association. The General Meeting is the same body as the Plenary of the VPI and Applicant NGOs are informally admitted to the VPA once they are admitted to the VPI as NGO Participants. Formal admission takes place at the next Annual General Meeting of the VPA, held at the same time as the Annual Plenary Meeting of the VPI.

Annex A – Key Document List

- The Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Governance Rules
- [The Roles and Responsibilities of NGOs](#)
- [The NGO Pillar Verification Framework](#)

APPENDIX 4 –VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

**VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE
FRAMEWORK FOR ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS**

The criteria below outline the entry process and expectations for new Observers of the Voluntary Principles Initiative. It is not intended to apply to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Council on Mining & Metals, or the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, each of which have been granted status as a permanent Observer.

1. Admission Process

- 1.1 At any time, an organization (hereinafter referred to as “Applicant Observer”) may formally request to attend proceedings of the Voluntary Principles Initiative as an Observer.
- 1.2 The request is made in writing to the Secretariat. The request should include a statement describing the activities the Applicant Observer undertakes, or plans to undertake, that are supportive of the objectives of the Voluntary Principles Initiative. The request should describe the organization and its interest in becoming an Observer. The request should also reflect the Applicant Observer’s relevant expertise, for example in human rights and/or with companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy, and should demonstrate that the Applicant Observer is willing, and has the capacity to, contribute to the Voluntary Principles Initiative. Finally, the request should identify any legal, regulatory, or administrative actions that the Applicant Observer has pursued, or intends to pursue, against any Voluntary Principles Participant.
- 1.3 An Applicant Observer’s request is to be delivered to the Steering Committee for its consideration, in consultation with the Plenary.
- 1.4 An Applicant Observer is approved to attend Voluntary Principles Initiative proceedings if its request is approved by the Plenary, as represented by the Steering Committee. As noted in Paragraph 3.2, an Observer may participate in meetings of specific Working Groups only upon invitation by the Steering Committee.
- 1.5 The approval or disapproval of an Applicant Observer’s request is to be communicated to the Applicant Observer by the Secretariat.

- 1.6 Upon approval, an Observer is required to sign a statement acknowledging the confidentiality provisions which all Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative are expected to follow, as set forth in the Participation Criteria.
- 1.7 If approved, an Observer is able to attend proceedings of the Voluntary Principles Initiative for a one-year term, with an option to extend at the discretion of the Plenary.
 - i. An Observer's term is to officially begin on the date that its request is approved.
 - ii. Each year, in advance of the Annual Plenary Meeting, the Steering Committee should request that the Secretariat determine whether current Observers wish to seek extension of their terms for an additional year.
 - iii. The Secretariat is to provide the Steering Committee with a list of all Observers who wish to extend their terms for an additional year.
 - iv. The Steering Committee makes a recommendation to the Plenary regarding the extension of each Observer's term for an additional year.
 - v. At the Annual Plenary Meeting, the Plenary reviews and votes on the proposed extensions.

2. Entry Criteria

- 2.1 An Applicant Observer may not, because of its functions, role, or mandate, be qualified to be a member of one of the three Voluntary Principles Pillars.
- 2.2 An Applicant Observer should be an industry association, an international institution, or a national institution.

3. Role of Observers

- 3.1 An Observer is eligible to attend all Plenary meetings, other than proceedings from which it has specifically been excluded by decision of the Steering Committee, pursuant to Paragraph 3.3.

- 3.1 Upon invitation by the Steering Committee, an Observer may participate in meetings of specific Working Groups.
- 3.2 At any time, a member of the Steering Committee, the Plenary, or a Working Group may ask that the Steering Committee exclude an Observer from specific proceedings.
- 3.3 An Observer is not eligible to vote.

APPENDIX 5.1 – REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR THE CORPORATE PILLAR

**INITIATIVE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES
ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

CORPORATE PILLAR REPORTING GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

The Participation Criteria of the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (“Voluntary Principles Initiative”) sets forth each Participant’s intent to engage in full dialogue on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles. The Criteria further state that each Participant is to report annually to the Plenary on its efforts to implement, and/or assist in the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles.

The purpose of the Reporting Guidelines is to help: (i) support transparency regarding efforts to support and implement, and/or assist in the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles; (ii) assist Participants in reporting on efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles to the Plenary (iii) provide a consistent framework for reporting on the verification process identified in respective verification frameworks, and (iv) facilitate the exchange of good practices among Participants.

The reports are *not* intended to grade implementation by one Participant against another. Participants are expected to describe their efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles each year recognizing any and all security and legal considerations, as well as practical issues related to the collection of required information.

II. CORPORATE PILLAR REPORTING GUIDELINES

The Corporate Pillar Reporting Guidelines are divided into four sections:

- (A) Commitment to the Voluntary Principles;
- (B) Policies, Procedures and Related Activities;
- (C) Country Implementation; and
- (D) Lessons and Issues.

Sections A-C set forth expected reporting commitments and Section D is optional.

Note that some of the Reporting Guidelines call for a description of company processes, while others call for examples, often of the processes in practice. In addition, some of the Reporting Guidelines may call for overlapping or related material, which may appropriately be combined

by companies in their reports. Further, for some of the Reporting Guidelines, there are detailed Guidance Notes, which align with or are otherwise related to the Guidance on Certain Roles and Responsibilities of Companies; while these Guidance Notes are optional, robust and fulsome annual reports will take due consideration of them, and seek to incorporate them where applicable and appropriate. The Reporting Guidelines also contain cross-references to relevant UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which may further inform the substance or manner in which information is reported.

Finally, in addition to the information expressly identified in the Reporting Guidelines, the Corporate Pillar Verification Framework specifically provides that companies that have opted in to the Framework will select organizationally appropriate performance indicators and include the review assessment process in annual reports to the Plenary consistent with these Reporting Guidelines. The Guidance Notes suggest that this content appear in connection with Reporting Guideline 13, and that companies include information related to the results or outcomes of those assessments.

III. REPORTING CONTENT

A. Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
1	Public Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles, engagement in the Voluntary Principles Initiative, and transparency. ¹⁷	<p>Public Statement of Commitment or Endorsement of the Voluntary Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe senior management’s understanding of and commitment to the Voluntary Principles • Describe (or provide publicly available link to) company policy statement on the Voluntary Principles • Describe how public commitment was developed, human rights are addressed in commitment, and dissemination of the commitment (including in location of operations). <p>Engagement in the VPI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe company efforts to abide by the Governance Rules

¹⁷ Cross-Reference to Roles & Responsibilities documents, Verification Frameworks, and U.N. Guiding Principles: Commitment to the guidelines of the VPI, and Engagement in the VPI; UNGP 16(a), 21

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify participation at Annual and Extraordinary Plenary Meetings • Describe participation in Pillar Meetings, Working Groups, in-country meetings, and dialogue with other Participants • Describe promotion of cross-pillar implementation to support implementation of the Voluntary Principles • Describe work undertaken to maintain the Voluntary Principles as a leading multi-stakeholder initiative, aligned with international norms and best practice in the field of business and human rights • Confirm commitment to provide timely responses to reasonable requests for information from other Participants in order to facilitate greater understanding of issues related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and include examples of collaboration. <p>Transparency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe public communication efforts to implement or assist in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and mechanism for communicating statement of commitment publically. • Describe publication of Voluntary Principles reports
2	Examples of promoting awareness of the Voluntary Principles throughout the organization or government, including within the value chain. ¹⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe processes or efforts to promote the Voluntary Principles with contractors and sub-contractors. • Describe efforts to promote the Voluntary Principles with host governments and authorities (national, state and local).
3	Examples of promoting and advancing implementation of the Voluntary Principles internationally ¹⁹	<p>In addition to examples, consider content that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes efforts to promote the Voluntary Principles at international fora. • Describes efforts to promote the Voluntary Principles in external industry fora/associations.

¹⁸ Outreach to Internal Stakeholders; UNGP 16(d)

¹⁹ Outreach to External Stakeholders

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes efforts to work with civil society organizations, local NGOs and partners to promote and understand the Voluntary Principles. • Describes efforts to engage with local communities to promote and understand the Voluntary Principles. • Describes participation in dialogue with fellow Participants and external stakeholders around the VPI, implementation and experience.
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B. Policies, Procedures, and Related Activities

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
4	Relevant policies, procedures, and/or guidelines (or any changes thereto from the previous reporting year) to implement the Voluntary Principles.	<p>At a Corporate level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how the Voluntary Principles are incorporated into company policy framework and business practices. • Describes processes or efforts to maximize employee awareness of the Voluntary Principles and their capacity to implement them, including through training workshops, the provision of guidance, and sharing best practices. • Describes the substantive content of trainings, including, if appropriate, examples of trainings. <p>At Local level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe process for informing General Manager and local security lead employees on the corporate policy on the Voluntary Principles. Describe supporting implementation and guidance documents/tools for on-the-ground operations that have been developed.
Risk Assessment		
5	Company procedure to conduct security and human rights risk assessments, and integrate findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the risk assessment process used, according to the criteria in the Voluntary Principles, and how the findings are integrated into management systems. The criteria in the Voluntary Principles are: risk identification, the potential for violence, human rights record for private and/or public security

		<p>providers, a rule of law analysis, conflict analysis, and equipment transfer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe who has reviewed the risk assessment in the company (e.g., General Manger, Local Security Manager, Community Relations Manager, etc.). • Mindful of legitimate and evident company concerns (such as confidentiality, safety, legal, or political concerns, or local community impacts), consider including outcomes on the result of assessment activities (at individual sites or aggregated).
Engagements with Security Forces		
6	<p>Company procedure or mechanism to report security-related incidents with human rights implications by public/private security forces relating to the company’s activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the company process for recording and reporting credible allegations of security-related incidents with human rights implications by public security forces (in areas of operation related to company activities) to appropriate host government authorities and, where appropriate, urging investigation and that actions be taken to prevent reoccurrence. • Describe the company process for actively monitoring the status of public security investigation status, including pressing for their proper resolution • Describe the process for supporting efforts by states and civil society organizations to strengthen state institutions to ensure accountability and respect for human rights • Mindful of legitimate and evident company concerns (such as confidentiality, safety, legal, or political concerns, or local community impacts),, describe relevant outcomes of security-related incidents with human rights implications reported to authorities, the monitoring and resolution of reported concerns (in individual instances, at individual sites, or on an aggregated basis).

7	Company procedure to consider the Voluntary Principles in entering into relations with private security providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the process for vetting, managing sourcing, contracting, service delivery, and other interactions with private security providers, so that they are conducted in accordance with the Voluntary Principles. • Describe international guidance consulted or referenced (e.g., ICoC) in entering into relations with private security providers. • Describe training for private security providers.
8	Company procedure or mechanism to investigate and remediate security related incidents with human rights implications by public/private security forces relating to the company’s activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the company’s grievance process for responding to and remediating adverse impacts. • Describe existing company process designed to cooperate through legitimate processes in responding to and remediating adverse impacts which have been identified as being caused by or contributed to by the company's actions. • Mindful of legitimate and evident company concerns (such as confidentiality, safety, legal, or political concerns, or local community impacts),, consider reporting specific examples or aggregated descriptions of outcomes on how human rights incidents that have been addressed.

C. Country Implementation

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
9	Overview of country operations selected for reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more fulsome and robust reports, select different sites than in the prior reporting year, where applicable. Include any notable changes from the previous reporting year if, however, the same country is being reported this year. • Consider whether it is appropriate to provide a report on those countries included within the assessment contemplated by the Corporate Pillar Verification Framework, and as contained in the Guidance Notes for Reporting Guideline 13.

10	Engagements with stakeholders on country implementation ²⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe efforts to identify local stakeholders. • Describe efforts to consult and encourage engagement with host governments, including public security agencies, and local communities about company security arrangements. • If appropriate, consider including the substance of those engagements.
11	Voluntary Principles considerations in the selection of private security providers and formulation of contractual agreement with private security providers, as well as arrangement with public security forces ²¹	<p>In addition to including outcomes of efforts and procedures to include the Voluntary Principles in engaging with private security and public security, consider content that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes processes and efforts to manage interactions with public security providers in accordance with the Voluntary Principles and, when feasible, include references to the Voluntary Principles in agreements for the provision of public security. • Describes efforts or processes to avoid the use of individuals who are credibly implicated in human rights abuses to provide public security services. • Describes efforts or processes to take appropriate measures to encourage use of force only when strictly necessary and to an extent proportional to the threat, and that the rights of individuals are not violated • Mindful of confidentiality, safety, and other considerations, reflect outcomes on the results of any efforts undertaken; these may include, for example, MOUs that have been entered with public security, instances where individuals credibly implicated in human rights abuses have been excluded, and analyses on proportional use of force by public security.
12	Examples of supporting outreach, education, and/or training of (i) relevant personnel, (ii) private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe awareness raising activities with local civil society and public and private security. • If appropriate, include or attach any substantive materials related to those outreach, education, or

²⁰ Accountability; UNGP 18

²¹ Public Security Engagement; UNGP 13 Commentary

	security, (iii) public security, and/or (iv) civil society (e.g. local NGOs, community groups)	training efforts, including training materials, white papers, or presentations.
13	Company procedure to review progress on implementing the Voluntary Principles at local facilities ²²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe indicators and relevant processes that have been developed to assess and address the company's implementation of the Voluntary Principles at relevant locations (e.g., facility, country, regional, etc.). • If opting out of the Corporate Pillar Verification Framework, so indicate. • If opting in, per the Corporate Pillar Verification Framework, categories to be considered in key performance indicators are: Participant Commitments, Risk Assessment, Public Security, Private Security, Process to Manage Allegations, and Engagement with Stakeholders. • The sites included for assessment should include a reasonably representative sample, which may involve the inclusion of a proportional number of problem locations and lower risk ones. Mindful of legitimate and evident company concerns (such as confidentiality, safety, legal, or political concerns, or local community impacts), outcomes on the result of the assessment may be appropriate to include.

D. Lessons and Issues

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
14	Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe lessons learned (including through implementation of the verification framework), action plans to implement the Voluntary Principles in the upcoming year, and/or new initiatives or

²² Corporate Pillar Verification Framework; UNGP 17, 20 Commentary. Reporting Guideline 13 is a logical location to include the mandatory content from the Corporate Pillar Verification Framework, and the Guidance Notes reflect that fact.

	Principles for the organization.	programs related to the Voluntary Principles in the upcoming year.
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APPENDIX 5.2 – REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR THE GOVERNMENT PILLAR

**INITIATIVE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES
ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

GOVERNMENT PILLAR REPORTING GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

The Participation Criteria of the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (“Voluntary Principles Initiative”) sets forth each Participant’s intent to engage in full dialogue on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles. The Criteria further state that each Participant is to report annually to the Plenary on its efforts to implement, and/or assist in the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles.

The purpose of the Reporting Guidelines is to help: (i) support transparency regarding efforts to support and implement, and/or assist in the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles; (ii) assist Participants in reporting on efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles to the Plenary; and (iii) facilitate the exchange of good practices among Participants.

The reports are *not* intended to grade implementation by one Participant against another. Participants are expected to describe their efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles each year recognizing any and all security and legal considerations, as well as practical issues related to the collection of required information.

II. GOVERNMENT PILLAR REPORTING GUIDELINES

The Government Pillar Reporting Guidelines are divided into four sections:

- (A) Commitment to the Voluntary Principles;
- (B) Policies, Procedures and Related Activities;
- (C) Implementation; and
- (D) Lessons and Issues.

Sections A-C set forth expected reporting commitments and Section D is optional.

Note that, for some of the Reporting Guidelines, there are detailed Guidance Notes, which align with or are otherwise related to the Roles and Responsibilities of Governments documents; while these Guidance Notes are optional, robust and fulsome annual reports will take due consideration of them, and seek to incorporate them where applicable and appropriate.

III. REPORTING CONTENT

A. Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
<i>Commitment to the Rules of the VPI</i>		
1	Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles.	
2	Statement of commitment to implement National Plan(s) (where applicable).	
<i>Engagement in the VPI</i>		
3	Describe government engagement in the VPs Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe engagement through meetings, working groups and dialogue with participants. • Describe project-level and plenary-level sharing of information • Describe how the government works to maintain the VPI as a leading multi-stakeholder initiative.
<i>Transparency and Dialogue</i>		
4	Describe how government shares information about efforts to assist in implementation of the Voluntary Principles with other participants and the public.	

B. Policies, Procedures, and Related Activities

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
<i>Rule of Law</i>		
5	As related to the Voluntary Principles, describe relevant policies, legislation,	This section could include a description of:

	procedures, and/or guidelines relevant to promoting and protecting human rights, consistent with international human rights obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the government abides by its obligation under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as related to the Voluntary Principles
6	As related to the Voluntary Principles, describe (where appropriate and feasible) if the government has conducted or assisted with security sector reform, strengthening of the rule of law, and developing institutional capacities.	
7	Within the context of the Voluntary Principles and in accordance with national and international law, describe how the government takes appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights abuses within its territory and/or jurisdiction by third parties, including with companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy and public and private security providers.	<p>This section could include a description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policies, legislation, regulations, and adjudication; • the provision of adequate and effective training for local prosecuting authority and the judiciary; and • actions taken to prevent recurrence of human rights harms.
<i>Verification and Accountability</i>		
8	Describe progress on the execution of National Voluntary Principles Action Plan.	
9	Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process as outlined in the Government Pillar Verification Framework.	<p>This section could include a description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the government updates Participants on implementation support via annual reports and periodic presentations, including how the government participates in open discussions and peer review of implementation; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any progress on points raised during peer review at the Annual Plenary Meeting or during a call/meeting held by the Verification Working Group.
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C. Promotion/Implementation

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
10	Public communication of commitment to the Voluntary Principles.	This section could include a description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> public statements, and publicly available reports promoting the Voluntary Principles.
11	Describe how the government engages with external stakeholders on the Voluntary Principles.	This section could include a description of how the government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinates promotion and/or implementation efforts; and shares best practices and promotes discussion and learning through case studies (e.g., speeches, conferences, presentations and statements made in multilateral and bilateral forums).
12	Promotion of the Voluntary Principles within the government.	This section could include a description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordination within and among different government agencies and ministries, as well as with Embassies.
13	Coordination in-country around the Voluntary Principles.	This section could include a description of how the government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotes awareness-raising activities among diplomatic missions, companies, and NGOs on the ground; conducts outreach to other governments (e.g., build understanding and support for the Voluntary Principles such as through in-country stakeholder meetings);

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • works with other governments in countries where oil, gas, and mining extraction occur; • works with companies, communities and civil society organizations on Voluntary Principles implementation, including through the promotion of local stakeholder engagement; and • seeks to help develop, identify, deliver and record best practices on implementation of the Voluntary Principles.
14	Describe how the government conducts outreach with domestic companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy to encourage them to implement the Voluntary Principles and join the Voluntary Principles Initiative.	
15	Describe how government enables and supports companies in implementing the Voluntary Principles.	<p>This section could include a description of how the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides guidance to companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy on Voluntary Principles implementation (when requested).
16	Describe how government engages in conflict areas to assist Corporate Participants to help them identify, prevent and mitigate the human rights related risks of their security arrangements.	<p>This section could include a description of how the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides assistance to assess and address heightened risk of abuse.

Risk Assessment		
17	Describe how the government engages with companies on issues related to company risk assessment.	<p>This section could include a description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efforts at the central government level and at the Embassy level (e.g. through conversation with host government on risks); • how the government shares information relevant to company risk assessments with Corporate participants and local civil society; and • how the government consults with companies about the impact of their security arrangements on local communities, and risks presented by the potential for violence.
Public Security		
18	Describe government efforts to promote and allow for training of public security providers.	<p>This section could include a description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how government promotes and allows for adequate and effective training for public security providers, including on international human rights law, international humanitarian law, local, and national laws, and international law enforcement principles.
19	Describe how government works with companies around engagement with public security forces.	<p>This can include description of how the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperates with companies in developing the human rights record of both public security forces and local and national law enforcement personnel; • supports companies' efforts to take appropriate sets in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ avoiding hiring individuals credibly implicated in human rights abuses, including through appropriate vetting mechanisms;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ works to ensure that force is only used when strictly necessary and to an extent proportional to the threat; and ○ works to ensure that public security forces do not violate the rights of individuals to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the right to engage in collective bargaining, or other related rights as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.
20	Describe how the government promotes and enables inclusion of Voluntary Principles language in agreements between companies and public security providers.	<p>This section could include a description of how the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● promotes and enables making security arrangements transparent and accessible to the public, subject to any overriding safety and security concerns.
Private Security		
21	Describe government efforts to promote and allow for training of private security providers.	<p>This section could include a description of how the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● promotes and allows adequate and effective training for private security providers, including on international human rights law, international humanitarian law, local and national laws, and international law enforcement principles; and ● cooperates as appropriate with companies in developing human rights record of private security providers.
22	Describe how the government develops appropriate policies and	

	oversight for the government’s own use of private security service providers.	
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D. Lessons and Issues

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
23	To help determine what best practices and lessons learned can be leveraged going forward, provide a summary of issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the government, (e.g. successful/unsuccessful engagement and implementation; from lessons learnt any changes to future priorities and plans for continued or emerging opportunities).	

APPENDIX 5.3 – REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR THE NGO PILLAR

**INITIATIVE OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES
ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

NGO PILLAR REPORTING GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

The Participation Criteria of the Initiative of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (“Voluntary Principles Initiative”) sets forth each Participant’s intent to engage in full dialogue on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles. The Criteria further state that each Participant is to report annually to the Plenary on its efforts to implement, and/or assist in the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles.

The purpose of the Reporting Guidelines is to help: (i) support transparency regarding efforts to support and implement, and/or assist in the implementation of, the Voluntary Principles; (ii) assist Participants in reporting on efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles to the Plenary; and (iii) facilitate the exchange of good practices among Participants.

The reports are *not* intended to grade implementation by one Participant against another. Participants are expected to describe their efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles each year recognizing any and all security and legal considerations, as well as practical issues related to the collection of required information.

II. NGO PILLAR REPORTING GUIDELINES

The NGO Pillar Reporting Guidelines are divided into five sections:

- (A) Commitment to the Voluntary Principles;
- (B) Procedures;
- (C) Promotion of the Voluntary Principles;
- (D) Country Implementation; and
- (E) Lessons and Issues.

Sections A-E set forth expected reporting commitments and Section E is optional.

Note that, for some of the Reporting Guidelines, there are detailed Guidance Notes. While these Guidance Notes are optional, robust and fulsome annual reports will take due consideration of them, and seek to incorporate them where applicable and appropriate.

III. REPORTING CONTENT

A. Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
1	Describe how you have engaged in the Voluntary Principles Initiative over the past year.	<u>Examples:</u> Participate in Pillar calls, working groups, Steering Committee, etc.
2	Describe efforts to increase transparency, both internally and externally, regarding your efforts to implement or support implementation of the Voluntary Principles.	<u>Examples:</u> Internal and external public reports, promoting greater transparency of the Voluntary Principles Initiative as a whole, information on your website, etc.
3	Describe any efforts to engage in dialogue with other participants of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.	<u>Examples:</u> Bilateral dialogue between members, hosting ad hoc calls to discuss specific issues, bringing together stakeholders

B. Procedures

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
4	Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process as outlined in the NGO Pillar Verification Framework.	This section could include a description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the NGO updates Participants on implementation support via annual reports and periodic presentations, including how the NGO participates in open discussions and peer review of implementation; and • any progress on points raised during peer review at the Annual Plenary Meeting or during a call/meeting held by the Verification Working Group.

C. Promotion of the Voluntary Principles

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
5	Describe your efforts to raise awareness of and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles with both internal and external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe examples of successful engagement.
6	Describe efforts to engage and facilitate participation of non-member CSOs, affected communities, and other relevant stakeholders in the Annual Plenary Meeting or workshops.	
7	Describe your efforts to promote the adoption of the Voluntary Principles into relevant government or corporate policies, as well as international standards and/or guidelines.	

D. Country Implementation

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
8	Describe efforts to strengthen the rule of law in the countries where you work.	
9	Describe efforts to conduct and monitor risk assessments for potential human rights violations in the areas where you work.	
10	Describe your efforts to strengthen policies, procedures and guidelines related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.	
11	Describe your efforts to engage with or support engagement with the public security sectors and/or private security sectors in the countries where you work.	
12	Describe efforts to hold Voluntary Principles participants accountable for upholding their roles and responsibilities as members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.	

E. Lessons and Issues

	<u>Reporting Guidelines</u>	<u>Guidance Notes</u>
13	Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization	

APPENDIX 6 – SELECTING AN ANNUAL PLENARY HOST GOVERNMENT THAT IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT CHAIR

Each year, the Government Chair is expected to either host the Annual Plenary Meeting or to coordinate with the Corporate Pillar in hosting the Annual Plenary Meeting.²³ The Government Chair and the Corporate Pillar may choose to host the Annual Plenary Meeting in a location other than the home of the Government Chair. The Government representing the physical location of the meeting is then the “Annual Plenary Partner Government.”

The Government Chair and, as relevant, the Corporate Pillar may choose to co-host the Annual Plenary Meeting with the government of a country that is a host of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy. In that instance, the “Annual Plenary Partner Government” would also be the “Annual Plenary Host Government.” The Annual Plenary Host Government does not need to be a member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Responsibilities of the Government Chair and the Corporate Pillar

The Government Chair maintains ultimate responsibility for the Annual Plenary Meeting. The Government Chair and the Corporate Pillar, as relevant, maintain ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all logistical arrangements are made and costs are met in a timely manner.

The Government Chair and, as relevant, the Corporate Pillar, also maintain ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the agenda for the Annual Plenary Meeting promotes robust and substantive discussion and for ensuring that the agendas for both the Annual Plenary Meeting and the Annual General Meeting of the Voluntary Principles Association address all required issues.

Responsibilities of the Annual Plenary Partner Government and the Annual Plenary Host Government

An Annual Plenary Partner Government and the Annual Plenary Host Government are expected to assist with the issuance of invitation letters and the processing of any other paperwork that may be necessary to address relevant visa requirements for attendees at the Annual Plenary Meeting.

An Annual Plenary Host Government will also serve as a co-host of the Annual Plenary Meeting, but will not have ultimate responsibility for logistics, costs, and the agenda.

²³ The host of the Annual Plenary Meeting will also host the Annual General Meeting of the Voluntary Principles Association.

Procedures

The Government Chair and, as relevant, the Corporate Pillar, wish to propose that another government serve as the Annual Plenary Host Government, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The Government Chair will first consult with and obtain a commitment to host the Annual Plenary Meeting from the proposed Annual Plenary Host Government.
2. The Government Chair will then make a proposal to the Government Pillar identifying the proposed Annual Host Plenary Host Government.
3. If the Government Pillar approves the Government Chair's proposal, the Government Chair and, as relevant, the Corporate Pillar, will then provide a written proposal to the Steering Committee identifying the proposed Annual Plenary Host Government. This proposal should be made no later than 13 months before the date of the meeting in question and should provide details on the following:
 - a. the estimated budget associated with hosting the Annual Plenary Meeting in the proposed location;
 - b. whether or not the proposed Annual Plenary Host Government is a member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative;
 - c. the proposed Annual Plenary Government's interest in, and willingness to, host the Annual Plenary Meeting;
 - d. opportunities for outreach to local stakeholders in the proposed location;
 - e. opportunities for field visits to the operations/facilities of companies in the industries of extracting, harvesting, or developing natural resources or energy in the proposed location;
 - f. security risks associated with the proposed location;
 - g. the capacity of the proposed Annual Plenary Host Government to host the Annual Plenary Meeting, including an identification of known capacity constraints;
 - h. the capacity of members of the Government Pillar to support the Annual Plenary Host Government through engagement with in-country personnel;
 - i. the presence of other Voluntary Principles Participants in the proposed location and the identification of the extent to which Participants may be able to support the Annual Plenary Host Government;

- j. the accessibility of the proposed location;
 - k. the costs associated with travel to the proposed location; and
 - l. the extent to which concerns about visas or other travel restrictions specific to the proposed location may impact the ability of Participants to attend the Annual Plenary Meeting.
4. Once it has received a proposal identifying a proposed location for an upcoming Annual Plenary Meeting, the Steering Committee, in close consultation with the Pillars, must make a decision regarding the proposal by the conclusion of the preceding Annual Plenary Meeting. The Steering Committee, in close consultation with the Pillars, must also develop a budget for the proposed meeting. This budget must be presented to the General Meeting of the Voluntary Principles Association for approval at the Annual General Meeting preceding the proposed Annual Plenary Meeting.
 5. Once the proposed location and the estimated budget are approved, the Government Chair will work with the Annual Plenary Host Government in planning the subsequent Annual Plenary Meeting.
 6. If the actual cost of an Annual Plenary Meeting hosted by a government that is not the Government exceeds the approved budget, the Government Chair will be responsible for ensuring that all costs are covered. Other Participants and stakeholders may contribute to these costs on a voluntary basis. If the actual cost of an Annual Plenary Meeting hosted by a government that is not the Government Chair is less than the approved budget, the excess funds will be rolled over into the following year's budget.