



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

**SECRETARY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON**  
**REMARKS TO THE 11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PLENARY MEETING OF THE**  
**VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**STATE DEPARTMENT, MARCH 23, 2011**  
**REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Good afternoon. I'm delighted that you were able to come to this meeting, and I want to thank all of you for your hard work and your extensive consultation throughout the year as we seek to strengthen the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the chair of this organization for the past year. And I would like to give Canada a warm welcome to the chair for next year.

I also want to thank Michael Posner and Dan Baer for their dedication to making the Voluntary Principles a human rights priority for the United States. We believe this organization can make a real difference to the lives of people around the world, and to the future of countries that are rich in natural resources but not always in the institutions that guarantee human rights and security.

Last year, I told Mike that when the United States took on the chairmanship, we would have to seize the opportunity to work with other participants to bolster the Voluntary Principles for the next decade. This administration understands that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, governments are not the only major players. Corporations,

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NGOs, private citizens, and civil society groups shape events and developments across the globe. And in places where central governments are weak, they are even more influential.

The companies here today operate in some of the toughest territory in the world, in places where the discovery of natural wealth can fuel bitter conflict. Your shareholders expect you to deliver profits, your employees expect you to keep them safe, and local populations expect you to keep them in jobs. We understand that as you cooperate with us, you have concerns about confidentiality. The United States government wants to be your ally and your partner – so we are all working together to make human rights a reality in the places where you do business.

These Principles can guide our efforts. But to have real impact, we have to back up our principles with action. So I want to encourage you to continue your work to give this organization a real structure. This structure must be clearly outlined in a governance document that permits the steering committee, secretariat, and all participants to work effectively and achieve results.

And in order to maintain the credibility of the Voluntary Principles in the years ahead, I urge you to put in place a credible process for evaluating compliance

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with the principles – a process that can drive continuous improvement. All this will give those on the outside confidence that the participants here are truly upholding a higher standard.

You have made progress on all these fronts. I know that today you will adopt some of the key elements of what will become a comprehensive document on organization. Please keep going. Don't stop until you get the job done.

I understand the Nigerian ambassador spoke here yesterday and asked some of the companies to “do more.” Well, I'm here to say we should *all* do more—and that includes the U.S. government. We have a shared goal: making a difference on the ground. We can't go it alone. Governments, companies, and NGOs all have a role to play, and each is crucial to our shared success. Let's keep working together to set the Voluntary Principles on a winning course for the long run.

Thank you.

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