

Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights
Report for LITE-Africa (Nigeria)
Calendar Year 2019

Submitted by
LITE - AFRICA

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Introduction:

The Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment (LITE-Africa) is the first African entity to be admitted into the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI). Prior to our admission into the VPI we have been actively engaged on issues of business and human rights -providing strategic policy direction for corporations and government in Nigeria. Currently we are a member of the VPI Steering Committee and Voluntary Principles Association (VPA) Board of Directors. Also, We co-chair the Nigerian Working Group (NWG) on the VPs and provides leadership and direction for the In-country Implementation Working Groups activities in Nigeria.

This annual report is consistent with the NGO pillar reporting guidelines, and it highlights LITE-Africa's commitment to the Voluntary Principles Initiative and procedures for supporting the verification process. It also includes efforts at promoting the VPs and contributions to the NWG efforts and lessons learnt over the reporting period.

Commitment to the Voluntary Principles:

LITE-Africa participated in a number of pillar and steering committee activities including the strategic retreat in London and Geneva (Switzerland) and contributed to the development of the strategic plan.

LITE-Africa supported transparency in the implementation of VPs through its internal and external communications including such as presentation on the verification framework at annual plenary, annual reports and placing VPs specific information on its website including a Basic Reader and a Call to Action.

LITE-Africa facilitates and engaged in cross-pillar dialogues on the VPs and a number of security and human rights issues to advance the rule of law in different forum. Specifically, LITE-Africa participated in the 8th United Nation Forum on Business and Human Rights and contributed to the demand for states to demonstrate progress and concrete commitments and plans in implementing the State duty to protect human rights and strengthening accountability

We signed on to a number public petitions aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in the extractive industry. Notable examples included the public petition pressuring the World Bank to make the review process of the Independent Accountability Mechanism more open and participatory to strengthen accountability within development finance and support countries when investment result is harmful. Also, We signed up to pressure the Equator Principle Association (EPA) about the need for a strengthened and centralised EPA grievance mechanism

LITE-Africa as a member of the African Coalition for Corporate Accountability (ACCA) was actively engaged in the sub-regional consultation and open discussions in West Africa on the UN treaty process on Business and Human Rights in and the capability building program on Free Prior and Inform Consent (FPIC), and access to Remedy in Accra and Abidjan which were aimed at amplifying the voices of affected sub-regional communities in the treaty process.

We contributed to the UN Office of the High Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR) Accountability and Remedy Project where we supported the call for strengthened state and

non-state mechanisms to address human rights complaints.

LITE-Africa co-chairs the NWG where it continues to provide leadership and supports open discussion and cross-pillar actions to promote the VPs in Nigeria.

Promotion of the Voluntary Principles:

Since 2006 LITE-Africa have continued to raise awareness and promote the VPs through media activities, security personnel and company employee capacity building programmes, and guiding corporate human rights policy directions.

LITE-Africa raised awareness among internal stakeholders by building the capacity of public and private security providers and employees of a member of the corporate pillar in both land and offshore locations in Nigeria. About 384 personnel including public and private security providers and employees of the companies were trained in the year 2019 which contributed to reduced incidents of human rights violation around company premises in the last year. LITE-Africa also promoted the VPs at the Annual Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) and actively engaged in the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights review process which contributed to the acknowledgement of the VPs as a key international.

LITE-Africa supported the NWG to create VP awareness in various government ministries, departments and agencies to garner government support that can eventually lead to institutionalization of the VPs in Nigeria.

Country Implementation:

LITE-Africa also engaged in a number of media activities in national dailies to raise public awareness and encouraged citizens'

demand for the rule of law, security reform and improved transparency and accountability in government.

Over the years, LITE-Africa has identified lack of capacity and resource as a potential risk for human rights violation by security operatives. This explains why LITE-Africa has continued to intensify effort at building the capacity of public and private security providers, particularly the ones deployed to oil facilities to minimize the risk of human rights violation.

LITE-Africa's Human Rights Clinic has continued to respond to cases of human rights violation and abuses, support dispute resolution within the extractive sector and facilitate dialogue especially between oil producing communities and security agencies protecting oil facilities in the Niger Delta. The center monitors and coordinates its activities and continues to provide a non-judicial remedy mechanism to the public. The Clinic also receives complaints from the public on human rights related issues and channels such complaints to relevant security agencies for remedies.

LITE-Africa led other NWG CSO members to carry out a baseline assessment of the VPs implementation in Nigeria to hold VPI participants accountable for their roles and responsibilities on the VPs. The findings will strengthen VPs implementation and inform the next activities of the NWG in Nigeria.

Lessons and Issues

There is need for more awareness raising and capacity building among CSOs about the content of the VPs and their role within it as most local CSOs do not have mechanisms or tools for monitoring risk assessments and holding VPI members accountable for their roles and responsibilities.

We have learnt from the NWG experience that In-country Implementation Working Groups effort is a far-reaching and more sustainable way of promoting the VPs in fragile areas as it can easily garner key cross-pillar actors to effectively engage and have open discussion on the VPs implementation.

In 2020, LITE-Africa plans to advance the VPs by deepening our engagement and providing greater leadership in the in-country efforts and implementation of the two years action plan. LITE-Africa also intend to expand its trainings programmes, and carry out promotional activities through the media, and multi-stakeholder dialogues involving government, oil companies, organized labour, CSOs and local community members. We will continue our outreach and partnership on the VPs to include non-extractive sectors that often experience similar security issues working closely with networks and the NWG.