

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
GHANA ON VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON
SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE**

SUBMITTED TO THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATION

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INTRODUCTION

Ghana joined the Voluntary Principles (VPs) Initiative as an engaged country through its statement at the 2014 Plenary Meeting in Montreux, Switzerland. Ghana therefore submits this report in respect of activities undertaken in the year 2020 in line with its commitment.

A. COMMITMENT

The decision to sign on to the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) affirmed Ghana's commitment to protect, respect and promote human rights in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and in line with UN Guidelines on Business and Human Rights.

Through various activities and initiatives during the year 2020, the Government of Ghana demonstrated its commitment to implementing the VPs in general and the National Action Plan (NAP) developed by the In-country Working Group of the Voluntary Principles in particular.

The Government continued to provide leadership to generally ensure that human rights and security of all within the jurisdiction of Ghana are assured. The Government through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) and its stakeholders supported companies in the extractive sector to incorporate the VPs into their operations. Government also provided support and collaborated with members of the NGO pillar to embark on outreach and sensitisation aimed at promoting human rights and responsible use of security in the extractive sector.

In the year 2020, the In-Country Working Group (ICWG) of the Voluntary Principles in Ghana received funding support from the Voluntary Principles Association (VPA) to implement some activities outlined in the NAP. These activities were; conducting baseline study on the status of human rights and security in the extractive industry, and developing standardized training curriculum for public and private security training.

The baseline study on the status of human rights and security in the extractive industry was conducted by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). The study was an important pre-requisite of the NAP, and was conducted to understand the current situation.

During the year under review, the Government pillar continued engagements with the other pillars. The Government pillar members, along with members from the Companies and NGO pillars, participated in two (2) meetings of the In-country Working Group organised by the co-chairs, i.e. Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Fund For Peace (FFP) and West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP).

Additionally, the Government pillar held a meeting on 30th June, 2020 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of Voluntary Principles specifically, and on their operations in general.

The Corporate and NGO pillars also held separate pillar-specific meetings to discuss issues pertinent to their role in the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) of the Voluntary Principles.

It is however important to state that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the implementation of planned activities for the year under review. Some planned meetings had to be cancelled in view of restrictions imposed by the Government of Ghana to curb the spread of COVID – 19 in the country.

Ghana will continue to work to sustain the interest of the Government pillar members in the VPs and also play its crucial role in the successful implementation of the NAP. In view of this, efforts will be made to get some more involvement of the petroleum sector players in the activities of the ICWG in the ensuing year.

B. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Implementation of National Action Plan (NAP)

As required of an engaged country, Ghana developed a National Action Plan (NAP) to guide the implementation of VPs in the country. The two-year plan outlines activities aimed at further promoting human rights and security in the extractive sector in Ghana. The ICWG adopted the NAP for implementation.

During the year under review, two key activities of the NAP were implemented with funding support from the VPI. These are a baseline study on human rights and security in the extractive

sector and development of a curriculum to train public and private security personnel and other stakeholders in the VPs.

The Government of Ghana upon the guidance of the ICWG established a Permanent Secretariat at the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. The Secretariat has received logistical support (laptop computer, printer and internet modem) from the VPI to facilitate its work of providing administrative support and coordinating the activities of the three pillars.

C. COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION

During the year under review, the Government of Ghana through the ICWG facilitated the implementation of two key activities of the NAP i.e. baseline study on human rights and security in the extractive sector and development of a curriculum for VPs training. Details of these activities are provided below:

Baseline Study on Human Rights and Security in the Extractive Sector

The In-country Working Group (ICWG) engaged the services of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Ghana's human rights institution, to conduct a baseline study on human rights and security in the extractive sector. The baseline study was necessary to understand the current situation of human rights and security issues in the communities where mining and other extractive activities are undertaken. It was therefore agreed by stakeholders as a pre-requisite for implementation of other activities outlined in the NAP.

The baseline study was specifically to:

1. Assess the sector- specific (mining, oil and gas) human rights situation in specific reference to the VPs, including security, economic and environmental
2. Determine the nature of human rights violations in these sectors and ascertain the reasons for the violations
3. Make related recommendations to:
 - i. curtail human rights violations in the communities
 - ii. promote building of cordial relations between and among competing interest groups in mining and oil and gas sectors
 - iii. promote awareness of human rights and responsibilities of interest groups

A Research Team from CHRAJ led by the Commissioner and Director (Human Rights) conducted the baseline study in line with the agreed methodology. The Team interviewed focal persons and residents of twelve (12) communities in the catchment areas of mining and oil/gas companies in the Western Region.

The team also held bilateral discussions with the following regulatory agencies and companies:

- Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
- Ministry of Energy
- Minerals Commission
- Ministry of the Interior
- Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Ghana Health Service
- Ghana Police Service
- Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)
- Tullow Oil
- AngloGold Ashanti Limited (Iduapriem Mine)
- Ghana Manganese Company
- Gold Fields Ghana Limited (Tarkwa Mine)
- University of Mines and Technology

CHRAJ is in the process of finalising the report on the baseline study for validation by the stakeholders. However, the preliminary findings indicate that, the VPI is better understood and applied in the large scale mining sector than the small scale mining sector. It also indicated that community members are of the view that the oil/gas and mining companies do not provide adequate employment opportunities to indigenes.

Development of Training Curriculum on VPSHR

The ICWG engaged the services of Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) to develop a training curriculum on VPs. The curriculum is expected to provide a

unified framework for all training on VPs for public and private security personnel and officers from Government agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

During the year under review, the Consultant submitted a draft framework of the curriculum for the consideration of the ICWG. Comments and feedback from members was communicated to the Consultant to finalise the curriculum.

D. LESSONS AND ISSUES

Extractive Companies operating in Ghana have demonstrated commitment to the VPs and to the implementation of the NAP. Consequently, these companies have undertaken their risk assessment. The ICWG has created a platform for member companies to share their experiences and provide updates on emerging/new security and human rights issues they face in the communities where they operate. However, there are sometimes lack of cordiality between the companies and some agencies. The ICWG is helping to address some of these issues.

The establishment of a Permanent Secretariat at the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources with logistical support from the VPI has enhanced coordination amongst the three pillars. The ICWG has also provided a platform for dialogue and sharing of ideas amongst members to ensure the successful implementation of the NAP. There is the need for participants to get more active on the platform for sharing of ideas.

The ICWG organised some virtual meetings in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and this has been found to encourage participation by members who have concerns about social distancing and observance of the COVID-19 protocols.

The Government of Ghana, as part of measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, imposed restrictions on public gatherings, including large meetings. This has affected some planned activities of the ICWG during the year under review. The ICWG had two (2) meetings instead of the four (4) initially planned. Also some planned field activities to communities where extractive activities take place could not be undertaken.

The major challenge to expanding the Government and NGO pillars' involvement in implementing the VPs remains funding/budgetary constraint. The funding support from the

VPI has been crucial for the successful implementation of the two (2) key activities mentioned earlier and has kept the ICWG and the Permanent Secretariat functional.

It is expected that the VPI will continue to provide funding for the activities of the ICWG and Permanent Secretariat. Efforts are being made to get some Government funding for outstanding activities of the NAP that funding does not currently exist for, and to mainstream some activities into the operations of the Government agencies.