

**Government of Canada Annual Report to the  
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Initiative  
(2021 calendar year)**

**A. Commitment to the Voluntary Principles**

***Commitment to the Rules of the VPI***

**1. Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles**

Canada is committed to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights as a tool to help anticipate and mitigate risks associated with the deployment of public and private security, particularly in the extractive sector. Canada also strongly supports the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) and recognizes its value in promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue, mutual learning and collaborative problem-solving in a way that builds relationships that make it possible to respond effectively to challenges related to security and human rights.

Canada is pleased that the VPI has expanded both in its membership and in its scope of application. The usefulness and applicability of the Voluntary Principles' risk assessment approach and its strong emphasis on communication, training and confidence-building have led to the Voluntary Principles being applied by many non-members as well, in particular those operating in complex environments. We welcome the discussions that have taken place within the Steering Committee throughout 2021 to continue supporting implementation activities, to strengthen accountability and impact assessment and to move forward with a strategic review of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

**2. Statement of commitment to implement National Plan (s)**

N/A

***Engagement in the VPI***

**3. Describe government engagement in the VPs Initiative**

Canada's engagement in the VPI is a responsibility of Global Affairs Canada, a government department led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of International Trade, and the Minister of International Development, each of whose portfolios intersect with the Voluntary Principles.

- Overall coordination of Canada's involvement in the Voluntary Principles Initiative and promotion of the Voluntary Principles for the Government of Canada is the responsibility of the Natural Resources and Governance Division at Global Affairs Canada.
- The Responsible Business Conduct Division at Global Affairs Canada is responsible for the promotion of the Voluntary Principles to Canadian companies, leveraging Canada's network of over 160 trade offices and 1400 trade commissioners worldwide.
- Staff across the Department are responsible for international diplomacy and the multilateral or bilateral promotion of human rights, which includes the Voluntary Principles as a tool for

preventing and mitigating human rights abuses.

- Global Affairs Canada draws upon a number of internal contact points to develop and coordinate its engagement on the Voluntary Principles, including various thematic, geographic, and legal divisions, as well as Canadian embassies and high commissions abroad, and other Canadian government departments.

Canada has been an active member of the Government Pillar of the Voluntary Principles Initiative since 2009, and joined the Steering Committee in 2015. Canada previously chaired the VPI in 2011-2012 and 2016-2017, and took on the role of Chair again in April 2021. Canada's priorities as chair include supporting the development of new tools such as guidance on human rights defenders, promoting in-country implementation in Mozambique, Brazil and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and broadening the base of the government pillar. Canada has also provided funding to enhance the effectiveness of the initiative in addressing gender considerations and the unique human rights risks faced by vulnerable groups through the project "Enhancing Gender Equality through the Voluntary Principles."

Canada continues to organize the Canada Working Group on the Voluntary Principles in order to convene Canadian affiliated VPI members and organizations that demonstrate a strong effort to implement or support the Voluntary Principles. The Working Group meets on a bi-annual basis to share ideas and approaches on VPI matters as well as broader security and human rights issues.

#### ***Transparency and Dialogue***

##### **4. Describe how government shares information about efforts to assist in implementation of the Voluntary Principles with other participants and the public**

As an active participant in the VPI Canada shares information about implementation assistance through this annual public report, as well as by providing updates to the relevant working groups of the Steering Committee. Please see (9) for more information on steps taken by Canada in accordance with the Government Pillar Verification Framework.

More general information is made available to the public online via websites maintained by Global Affairs Canada and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada ([Project profile of the VPI, www.csr.gc.ca](https://www.csr.gc.ca) and <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/home> respectively), which promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles and showcase Canada's CSR Strategy and international CSR standards, including the Voluntary Principles.

#### **B. Policies, Procedures and Related Activities**

##### ***Rule of Law***

##### **5. As related to the Voluntary Principles, describe relevant policies, legislation, procedures, and/or guidelines relevant to promoting and protecting human rights, consistent with international human rights obligations**

Specific to the VPs:

The Government of Canada expects Canadian companies operating abroad to respect human rights, operate lawfully, and conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner consistent with international principles and standards on responsible business conduct, including the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

The Government of Canada has had a responsible business conduct strategy (RBC) since 2009. The Voluntary Principles have been endorsed as an important guideline for Canadian companies to follow in both the 2009 and 2014 Strategy iterations. A new RBC strategy is under development and is due to be released in 2022.

#### Domestic promotion and protection of human rights in general:

Canada is party to the seven principal United Nations human rights conventions and covenants (also known as treaties). As a party to these treaties, Canada agrees to respect and ensure the human rights of all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, without discrimination of any kind.

Canada takes these obligations and commitments seriously. Under Canada's federal system of government, the federal government shares responsibility for ensuring respect for human rights with provincial and territorial governments.

Canada has a strong domestic framework for the protection of human rights, which includes numerous guarantees for vulnerable groups:

- Human rights are constitutionally entrenched in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (adopted in 1982), which sets out those rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society. The *Charter* applies to all government activities, at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels and includes protections related to fundamental freedoms; democracy; mobility; life, liberty and personal security; equality; official languages; minority language education rights; Canada's multicultural heritage and Indigenous peoples' rights.
- Canada's Constitution contains additional protections for the rights of Aboriginal peoples of Canada. These include rights over lands and to self-government.
- Human rights are implemented in Canada through numerous federal, provincial and territorial government policies and programs.

For more information about Canada's domestic legal framework for human rights protection, please consult Canada's [core document](#) on the website of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

#### **Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**

In 2017, the Government of Canada launched [Canada's National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security 2017-2022](#).

The action plan provides a framework for a cohesive whole-of-government approach to implement this important agenda and ensures that activities in fragile and conflict-affected states align with broader commitments such as gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, respect for women's and

girls' human rights, and inclusion and respect for diversity. As part of the action plan, Canada has worked to advance the women, peace and security agenda through all of its diplomatic and programming efforts, making a specific commitment to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated in all peace and security efforts. This action plan is being implemented by six federal departments and one agency.

### **Forced labour**

In July 2020, Canada became the second country in the world after the US to ban the importation of goods produced by forced labour. While federal departments are working together to advance the effective operationalisation of the forced labour import prohibition in Canada, it is the responsibility of Canadian companies to conduct due diligence on their supply chains.

In January 2021, in coordination with international partners, Canada adopted trade-related measures in response to concerns over human rights violations in the People's Republic of China against members of the Uyghur ethnic minority and other minorities. Global Affairs Canada also created the [Xinjiang Integrity Declaration](#) to be used for all Canadian companies using trade commissioner services that are sourcing directly or indirectly from Xinjiang or from entities relying on Uyghur labour, established in Xinjiang; or seeking to engage in the Xinjiang market. The declaration acknowledges that the company is aware of Canadian law with respect to the prohibition of forced labour, recognizes the Government of Canada's expectations with respect to the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#) and [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and is aware of the human rights situation in Xinjiang. Companies are required to affirm that they are not knowingly sourcing products or services from a supplier implicated in forced labour or other human rights violations and commit to conducting due diligence on their suppliers in China to ensure there are no such linkages.

### International promotion and protection of human rights in general:

One of the obligations in the United Nations Charter is to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms. Canada fulfills this obligation through bilateral engagement, multilateral international assistance, and through active cooperation with relevant United Nations mechanisms such as visits of special rapporteurs and the UN's Universal Period Review process.

### **Voices at risk: Canada's guidelines on supporting human rights defenders**

In 2021, Global Affairs Canada continued to promote [Voices at risk: Canada's guidelines on supporting human rights defenders](#). This tool is a how-to guide for supporting human rights defenders with practical advice for officials at Canadian missions abroad and at headquarters, as well as a clear statement of Canada's commitment to promoting all human rights, including by supporting the vital work of human rights defenders. They are intended to complement and support the ongoing work of Canada's diplomatic corps by ensuring that Canada continues to provide effective support to people around the world who promote human rights—from helping human rights defenders be more effective advocates to helping protect them from harm.

The Guidelines now reflect Canada's feminist foreign policy, including an understanding that human rights defenders—and in particular women and LGBTQIS2 human rights defenders—have intersecting identities (such as race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity), and experience numerous and concurring forms of discrimination, harassment and marginalization. Specific guidance has been developed to better recognize the different experiences lived by human rights

defenders belonging to one or more specific identifiable groups that face discrimination, in various contexts.

For more information about Canada's international efforts to promote and protect human rights, please see: [http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/human\\_rights-droits\\_homme/rights-droits.aspx?lang=eng](http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/rights-droits.aspx?lang=eng).

### **Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy**

Canada's [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#) recognizes that advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the most effective way to reduce poverty and build a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world. The policy also commits Canada to providing international assistance that is human rights-based and inclusive, which means that all people have the same human rights, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, and other aspects of identity. In keeping with this policy, Canada is supporting women's leadership and decision-making in climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience-building, and sustainable natural resources management.

In 2021 Global Affairs Canada consulted with a range of stakeholders to prepare guidance on "*Advancing Canada's Feminist Approach to Natural Resource Governance and Management*". The document aims at assisting Global Affairs Canada staff, other government departments, the office of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprises, as well as partners, including, civil society organizations. It provides guidance for the development and implementation of policies, advocacy and programs in developing countries that address barriers to the equal participation of women, girls, Indigenous peoples and marginalized people in decision-making on NRGM in the promotion of sustainable, inclusive, transparent and responsible NRGM.

### **Inclusive Approach to Trade**

As part of its Trade Diversification Strategy, the Government of Canada is advancing an inclusive approach to trade that seeks to ensure that the benefits and opportunities that flow from trade are more widely shared, including with under-represented groups such as women, small and medium enterprises, and Indigenous peoples. Global Affairs Canada's efforts to date focus on putting more Canadians at the heart of our trade policy-making agenda, expanding access for more Canadians through inclusive content in trade agreements, and engaging with international partners such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G20 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation to promote and advance trade initiatives.

### **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**

Responsible natural resource management requires active engagement to prevent corruption and human rights abuses. In response to requests from other governments and organizations, Canada has provided technical expertise for strengthening institutional capacity, and regulatory and policy advice to support responsible natural resource governance in their regions. Canada also seeks to strengthen the frameworks for responsible business conduct abroad, to ensure that the extraction, trading, handling and export of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas is respectful of human rights and does not contribute to conflict. Canada supports other governments in developing institutional capacities in

natural resource management through partnerships with the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals and Metals (IGF), the Canadian International Resource and Development Institute (CIRDI), the World Bank's Extractives Global Programmatic Support fund, and other organizations.

**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 extractive companies and public and private security providers**

Canada's Domestic Policy

There are various avenues of redress for individuals who believe they are victims of human rights abuses committed in Canada by third parties. These include:

As described in (5), all governments in Canada —federal, provincial and territorial—have adopted legislation prohibiting discrimination on various grounds in regard to employment matters, the provision of goods, services and facilities customarily available to the public, and accommodation. Individuals can pursue and seek redress for violations of anti-discrimination codes by third parties through federal and provincial/territorial human rights commissions, tribunals or the courts.

- Canada's Criminal Code, which applies in every jurisdiction in Canada, is another important means of preventing, investigating, punishing and providing redress for human rights abuses by third parties, most notably in relation to the right to life and security of the person.
- Legislation in relation to labour and employment, adopted by all governments in Canada, helps to ensure that workers in both the public and private sectors have a safe and healthy workplace, are subject to fair employment practices, and can organize collectively.
- Some jurisdictions in Canada also have laws in place to protect individuals' privacy rights vis-à-vis both public- and private-sector entities.
- Certain protections in the common law (that is, judge-made law, which applies in most jurisdictions across Canada), such as procedural fairness and property rights, have a long history in Canada. The common law contains remedies for abuses by third parties of some human rights - for example, damages (including compensation) may be sought for certain intentional or negligent behaviour that causes harm, wrongful dismissal from employment, defamation of character, libel or infringement of property rights.

Canada's International Policy

In relation to the VPs and the activities of Canadian extractive sector companies operating abroad, Canada's approach to RBC includes dispute resolution mechanisms to help resolve differences between Canadian companies and those affected by their operations abroad.

This includes:

**The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE)**

Ms. Sheri Meyerhoffer, was appointed by the Minister of International Trade Diversification on April 8, 2019. Ms. Meyerhoffer's office is mandated to promote UN and OECD Responsible Business Conduct guidelines and address complaints and inquiries related to allegations of human rights abuse arising from the operations of Canadian mining, oil and gas and garment companies abroad. The CORE published its Operating Procedures and launched its online complaints mechanism in March 2021. To date, the CORE has received 46 inquiries and 5 complaints, of which 2 were admissible.

For more information, see [www.csr.gc.ca](http://www.csr.gc.ca) and the [Ombudsperson web page](#).

### **Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises**

The NCP is a voluntary, non-judicial grievance mechanism based on dialogue facilitation or mediation. It can assist the business community across all sectors, employee organizations, communities affected by a company's activities, and other stakeholders with dispute resolution, aimed at helping companies better implement the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. It can offer a forum for constructive dialogue between parties, aimed at helping them discuss concerns and work towards reaching a mutual agreement for the resolution of the specific issues that are brought forward. [Canada's NCP](#) is an interdepartmental committee of seven government departments, with the NCP Secretariat housed in the Responsible Business Practices division.

In 2021, the NCP received four Requests for Reviews. One Request for Review was accepted and led to mediation between the parties resulting in a recommendation from the NCP. The Final Statement will be published on the NCP website soon. Three other Request for Reviews are still being processed but it is not yet determined if NCP will proceed with an initial assessment.

It should be noted that neither the NCP nor the CORE are meant to replace local processes, nor do they preclude the use of court systems, either locally or in Canada, to seek legal restitution. At the same time, Canada recognizes that access to dialogue facilitation, including through the NCP, can be cost-effective, expeditious and an effective alternative to formal legal avenues for victims to seek remedy.

A company's decision not to engage with the NCP or CORE has real consequences. Companies that do not embody Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) best practices and refuse to collaborate in good faith, or do not engage constructively, with either of these offices may lose access to Government of Canada trade advocacy services and future economic support in foreign markets.

### ***Verification and Accountability***

#### **8. Describe progress on the execution of National Voluntary Principles Action Plan**

N/A

#### **9. Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process as outlined in the Government Pillar Verification Framework**

As an active participant in the VPI and pursuant to the Government Pillar Verification Framework, Canada shares information about implementation assistance through an Annual Report. Canada also makes periodical verification presentations, which covers Canada's general development assistance in responsible natural resource governance, and engagement efforts in the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

## C. Promotion/Implementation

### 10. Public communication of commitment to the Voluntary Principles

- CSR websites maintained by Global Affairs Canada and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles ([www.csr.gc.ca](http://www.csr.gc.ca) and <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/home> respectively).
- Various communications products and social media posts are used by Canadian embassies and headquarters to promote the Voluntary Principles during Responsible Business Conduct initiatives and more generally throughout the year.
- In 2021, Canada's commitment to, and promotion of, the Voluntary Principles was also highlighted in speaking remarks delivered by Canadian officials at natural resources and/or responsible business events and engagements.

### 11. Describe how the government engages with external stakeholders on the Voluntary Principles

Canada regularly engages with external stakeholders on issues related to sustainable natural resource management and standards such as the Voluntary Principles through different means, including:

- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the leading government ministry responsible for ensuring Canada's natural resources are developed sustainably, competitively, and inclusively also participated in several bilateral meetings and events that mentioned the VPs. In February 2021, NRCan met with Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum to have an information exchange and in December 2021, NRCan attended *Charting a Course for the Advancement of ESG Within the Mining Sector*, hosted by BDO Canada and a panel of industry experts from the mining and sustainable finance sector. In January 2022, NRCan attended *Canada's Approach to Sustainable Mining*, hosted by the Ministry of Mining of Greenland. NRCan also participated in the event *Developing Responsible and Sustainable Strategies in the North American Critical Mineral Supply Chain*, hosted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, International Institute for Sustainable Development in March 2022.
- As described in #3, Global Affairs Canada has engaged in a national Working Group on the Voluntary Principles in order to convene Canadian affiliated VPI members and other organizations that demonstrate a strong effort to implement or support the Voluntary Principles at a global level. The group consists of six companies, three NGOs, two industry organizations and the relevant Canadian federal government departments. The Working Group discusses collaborative efforts to strengthen the VPI and shares best practices and lessons learned on the more difficult security and human rights issues faced by local communities abroad, in the context of the VPs.
- The Devonshire Initiative; a forum for leading Canadian NGOs working in international development and mining companies to come together in response to the emerging social agenda surrounding mining and community development issues.



- The annual Mining Day on the Hill in Ottawa; which provides an opportunity for high-level management to meet with representatives of civil society, associations and extractives companies (including the Mining Association of Canada) to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest, both in Canada and abroad.

Canada coordinates with the Mining Association of Canada (MAC) given the industry association's commitment to the Voluntary Principles. All MAC members are encouraged to use the VPs at their mine sites, and all MAC members that operate internationally are required to report annually on how their security-related management systems align with the VPs. MAC is a member of the Canada Working Group on the VPs.

Multilaterally, Canada promotes international CSR standards, including the Voluntary Principles, at the OECD, the G7, the G20, the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation, the Organization of American States, the United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights, the Francophonie, and the Commonwealth.

Please see #13 and #14 for information about country-specific efforts and outreach to the private sector.

## **12. Promotion of the Voluntary Principles within the government**

Responsible business conduct (RBC) forms an integral part of the training that Global Affairs Canada's Trade Commissioners receive prior to being posted abroad. During training, Trade Commissioners are advised on how support Canadian companies to do business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner that is consistent with internationally recognized standards and practices. In addition, Global Affairs Canada delivers thematic-specific RBC training and webinars to officers at Canadian embassies, at headquarters, and at key international trade events. Specific information on the Voluntary Principles continues to be developed for inclusion in training courses for Canadian Trade Commissioners based in Canada and abroad. In 2021, five internal training webinars were conducted: Introduction to Responsible Business Conduct (Parts 1 and 2), Anti-Corruption Refresher, and Responsible Business Conduct: Capturing Key Performance Indicators (Parts 1 and 2). All training sessions were offered in English and French.

Regular Natural Resource Management working group meetings within Global Affairs Canada offer the opportunity to share information related to extractives, including on the Voluntary Principles. In addition, Global Affairs Canada is a member of an interdepartmental working group on global supply chains, whose objective is to strengthen the federal government's policy coherence related to business and human rights issues.

## **13. Coordination in-country around the Voluntary Principles**

In 2021, Canada continued to be actively engaged in the VPI In-Country Working Groups.

- Ghana: The Canadian Embassy is a member of the Ghana VPs Working Group.
- Nigeria: The High Commission of Canada in Nigeria has led on a series of demarches to encourage Nigeria to seek to join the Voluntary Principles Association. Canadian advocacy efforts were undertaken in coordination with the UK, Australia and Switzerland. Canada has

engaged the Minister of Defence; Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister of State for Petroleum Resources; Minister of Mines and Steel Development; Minister of Police Affairs; Minister of Niger Delta Affairs; Ministry of Justice; National Human Rights Commission; Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps; Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies; Nigerian Bar Association; Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS); and several civil society organizations. Social media was also used to amplify messaging conveyed bilaterally.

On January 19, 2022, an Inter-Ministerial Meeting on the Voluntary Principles took place on Nigeria's VPA membership.

- Mozambique: Canada's mission in Maputo called on its partnership with the UK and Swiss High Commissions and was invited to be part of the National Working Group on the VPs, being implemented by DCAF (Switzerland) and CDD (Mozambique). Canada has advocated for adherence to the VPs, including the recognition of women's role in the security sector, with several Government of Mozambique interlocutors, notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice.
- Myanmar: The Embassy of Canada joined the first meeting of Myanmar's In-Country Working Group in 2018. The coup in February 2021 resulted in an unstable and challenging security and operating environment, leading to the VPI secretariat and participating members, including Canada, agreeing to terminate the Myanmar ICWG.

Canada has been active in other areas to advance the VPs. For example, consistent with the VPs, and as the rule of law and human rights have continued to deteriorate over 2021, Canada has continuously called for companies and international organisations to stop any activities that directly or indirectly fund military activities. Following the coup, the Government of Canada issued a business advisory for Myanmar providing information on Canada's sanction regime and highlighting the Government of Canada's recommendation that businesses operating in Myanmar assess their operations, take any appropriate action to comply with Canadian sanctions and export controls, and uphold high standards of human rights and responsible business conduct.

In addition, the Canadian mission in Myanmar has emphasised the importance of VPs as a tool for preventing and mitigating human rights abuses in a security setting. The mission in Myanmar will continue to support the implementation of bilateral programming and fund local projects (through CFLI and the Field Support Services local fund) that aim to reduce gendered violence, promote women's participation in decision-making, and create a toolkit for companies to carry out VP implementation that is sensitive to the specific risks faced by different genders and vulnerable groups.

Other outreach, promotion, and implementation activities were conducted by Canada in a number of countries:

- Burkina Faso: Given regular rotation of public security personnel, mining companies such as IAMGOLD have invested in training and expressed interest in using the VPs courses and methodology. In 2021, Canada organized training on the VPs to demonstrate its relevance and applicability to government officials, including defense and security forces. Outreach

has been carried out with the Defense Minister, commanding officers of Burkina Faso's army and gendarmerie. While they have expressed interest in the initiative, particularly to guide their security agreements with mining companies, the lack of ready-to-use material in French, including clear training modules and expertise to facilitate implementation, has hampered constructive follow-up.

- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): The Canadian Embassy is a member of the in-country working groups and participated in different meetings and activities.
- Colombia: The Embassy of Canada is the only foreign entity to hold a seat on the Board of Directors of the "[Mining and Energy Committee for the VPs](#)" (CME), which meets monthly. Through its membership in the CME in 2021, Canada helped facilitate different spaces of dialogue to discuss challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the VPs in Colombia, and to increase awareness and participation in the initiative by local actors. In March 2021, Canada worked with the CME and Secretariat of the VPI to organize a webinar on collaboration and risk management with participation from the Head of the Secretariat of the VPI, Canada's Chair of the VPI, Canada's Ambassador to Colombia, the VP of the UN's working group on Business and Human Rights, the co-founder of the VPs initiative, and Colombia's Presidential Advisor to Human Rights and International Affairs.
- Mexico: The Canadian Embassy in Mexico has contributed to a regional initiative in collaboration with Natural Resources Canada and Canadian missions in Bogota and Lima to promote safety in mining environments. As part of the project, two Canadian mining companies and two Canadian mining suppliers presented a workshop under the Canada-Mexico Partnership on Best Practices in Mining Security. The Embassy also develop a public affairs strategy to promote, among other things, responsible business conduct within the Canadian mining sector in Mexico. During this five-week social media campaign, the mission highlighted the best practices of Canadian mining companies and their contribution to the security, well-being, social inclusion and community development in which they operate.
- Peru: Canada has led several RBC initiatives over 2021. A Human Rights Committee was established within the Sociedad Nacional de Minería, Petróleo y Energía (SNMPE). SNMPE requested Canada to participate in a future discussion about implementation of Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) in Peru.

**14. Describe how the government conducts outreach with domestic extractive companies to encourage them to implement the Voluntary Principles and join the Voluntary Principles Initiative**

Canada's CSR Strategy is clear in its expectation that all Canadian extractive companies adhere to the highest standards, including by implementing the Voluntary Principles. In order to promote such best practices, Canada makes extensive use of trade commissioners at embassies to implement Canada's CSR approach and advise Canadian firms on responsible business practice. This includes advising natural resource companies on the Voluntary Principles and its provisions.

**15. Describe how government enables and supports companies in implementing the Voluntary Principles**

The Government of Canada has a variety of initiatives in place to help Canadian companies better integrate CSR guidelines and standards into their operations, and to enhance the contribution of their activities to the broad economic growth of Canada and its trading partners, including developing and emerging economies. The Government also works with a broad range of CSR stakeholders to promote and increase understanding and awareness of recognized CSR standards, guidelines and best practices.

- Since 2009, a dedicated Responsible Business Fund of CAD \$250,000 has been deployed annually to missions through the Trade Commissioner Service, led or supported by over 30 Canadian missions in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and Europe. These in-market initiatives, comprising workshops, seminars, roundtables, and information product dissemination promote Canada's Responsible Business Conduct Strategy and international guidelines and best practices, including the Voluntary Principles.

Through our embassies, companies can have access to support for implementation of CSR best practices, including the Voluntary Principles. Recent examples of CSR initiatives undertaken by Canadian embassies include those listed in #13.

**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**

In addition to supporting the Voluntary Principles, Canada is engaged in international norm-setting initiatives such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidelines for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High Risk Areas, which outlines a risk-based approach and provides suggested measures for risk mitigation and indicators for measuring improvement. The working group for the OECD Due Diligence guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector assists companies in identifying potential human rights impacts of security provisions and recommends implementation of the Voluntary Principles. Canada is also a Participant in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) that regulates the international trade in rough diamonds, including in contributing to the development of the 2021 Kimberley Process Declaration on Supporting Principles for Responsible Diamond Sourcing as Best Practices.

As described in #7, the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) network is an information and support focal point for Canadian companies operating abroad, including in conflict-sensitive areas. Canada is actively engaged in in peace building and peace keeping in a number of conflict-affected countries.

In addition to activities led by Canadian embassies, Canada also supports the work of NGOs in conflict areas, including on issues related to natural resource management, and is an active supporter of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

***Risk Assessment***

**17. Describe how the government engages with companies on issues related to company risk assessment**

As described above in #7 and #16, the TCS provides information and training as relevant and/or requested on the Voluntary Principles, as well as other guidelines that provide for risk assessment and

mitigation such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidelines for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High Risk Areas, the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

### ***Public Security***

#### **18. Describe government efforts to promote and allow for training of public security providers**

Through the International Police Peacekeeping and Peace Operations (IPP) Program, jointly managed by Global Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Public Safety Canada, Canadian police officers are deployed to international peace support operations or other stabilization efforts. Prior to their deployment to UN peace operations, all candidates must complete training on human rights, gender diversity and sexual and gender-based violence. Canada has deployed more than 4,000 police officers to peace operations since 1989. They assist in rebuilding and strengthening police services in countries that have experienced conflict or upheaval.

Canada also promotes the training of public security providers with international assistance through its Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program, which includes a focus on security sector reform and training.

#### **19. Describe how government works with companies around engagement with public security forces**

Canada's Trade Commissioner Service is a reference point for any Canadian companies operating abroad, and can provide information or support as required.

#### **20. Describe how the government promotes and enables inclusion of Voluntary Principles language in agreements between companies and public security providers**

Canada makes extensive use of trade commissioners at embassies abroad to actively implement Canada's CSR approach, and advise Canadian firms on responsible business practice. This includes advising mining and oil and gas companies on the Voluntary Principles and its provisions, when relevant.

Moreover, Canada is a vocal supporter of the Model Clauses for Agreements between Government Security Forces and Companies with Respect to Security and Human Rights, a tool that is included in Canada's promotion of the Voluntary Principles and the VPI.

### ***Private Security***

#### **21. Describe government efforts to promote and allow for training of private security providers**

Canada was one of 17 States involved in the development of the "Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict" in 2008, and the "International Code of Conduct (ICoC) for Private Security Service Providers" in 2010, to promote respect for human rights, compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and the responsible provision of security services by PMSCs. In 2016, Canada became one of seven State members of the "International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers' Association" (ICoCA) which oversees implementation of the code of conduct through

three core functions: certifying companies that meet the ICoC requirements; monitoring and assessing member PMSCs efforts to comply with ICoC and handling complaints of alleged ICoC violations by PMSCs.

Canada promotes the Montreux Document and Code of Conduct during the procurement process for selecting private security contractors. Private security contractors that are members of ICoCA and/or have met international standards based on Montreux Document principles such as ISO 18788 are favourably evaluated.

During the public procurement bidding process, Global Affairs Canada also favourably evaluates private security contractors which can demonstrate, as part of the evaluation requirements of the Request for Proposal, a commitment to human rights through participation in training from recognized organizations (such as: Amnesty International, International Labour Organization, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Committee on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Commission of Jurists, or the International Crisis Group). The Government of Canada and Global Affairs Canada require that all private security contractors conduct an initial training with their personnel that includes human rights awareness.

## **22. Describe how the government develops appropriate policies and oversight for the government's own use of private security service providers**

Global Affairs Canada periodically reviews procurement processes to ensure compliance with Montreux document best practices. Global Affairs Canada currently meets 20 of the 23 best practices for contracting States outlined in part 2 of the Montreux document. The remaining three best practices which it does not meet, are not applicable outside armed conflict settings.

Global Affairs Canada vets private security contractors and screens the ownership of the selected private security contractors to verify the suitability of personnel to provide protective services, including human rights screening. Providers must verify and confirm the applicant's full name, date and place of birth, educational qualification, and perform background checks to determine with a reasonable degree of certainty that they (i) have not been convicted of a crime; (ii) have not been dishonourably discharged; (iii) have not had other employment or engagement contracts terminated for documented violations; and (iv) have not had a history of other conduct that, according to an objectively reasonable standard, brings into question their fitness to interact with the public from a position of authority or provide protective service.

Prior to commencement of these checks, providers are required to obtain from all applicants access to references, vital statistic records, prior employment records and other relevant documents for the purpose of these checks. This includes records relating to posts held with the military, police, or public or private security providers. This may also include criminal and civil records history; sexual offender indices and government and industry sanction lists.

### **D. Lessons and Issues**

## **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 continues or emerging opportunities).**

Lessons learned on outreach:

- It makes sense to be prepared to answer questions about the specific value-added of the VPs as compared to other voluntary initiatives and frameworks and to speak to where there is complementarity.
- Outreach to governments should demonstrate the benefits of a smart-mix balanced approach that combines mandatory and voluntary measures.
- Outreach to companies can highlight how the Voluntary Principles has practical tools to understand and implement their obligations under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Opportunities in the coming year:

- Canada plans to continue to engage NGOs, companies and other governments to actively take part in VPs multi-stakeholder discussions, and increase in-country implementation, both in member and non-member countries.
- Canada looks forward to the conclusions of the strategic review and to engaging collaboratively in reforms aiming at strengthening and improving the VPI.