

**Government of Canada Annual Report to the
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Initiative
(2022 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 (VPs) 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. As chair, we welcome the discussions that have taken place within the Steering Committee throughout 2022, in particular in the context of the strategic external evaluation of the VPI.

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 Trade Strategy and Responsible Business Conduct Division at Global Affairs Canada is responsible for the promotion of internationally recognised guidelines and standards related to responsible business conduct (RBC) across all sectors, including 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. In May 2022, Canada agreed to extend its term as Chair for an additional year. The strategic review of the initiative created a pivotal moment for Canada to play a crucial role in navigating the different reform options proposed by the consultants, the strategic commissioners and steering committee members. While some of the more transformational recommendations of the evaluation report remain to be discussed, the progress made at the December 2022 strategic retreat planted the seeds of important changes that could have lasting implications for the future governance of the initiative.

Canada is also proud of the funding provided 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.” The project resulted in the publication of an Implementation Guidance tool, on which training was provided to membership at the 2022 annual plenary meeting.

Finally, 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 an 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](#) and [Responsible business conduct abroad](#)), which promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles and showcase Canada’s RBC Strategy and international RBC 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 RBC, including the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Endorsement of the Voluntary Principles is part of Canada's approach to RBC abroad, particularly as it relates to the extractive and agro-business sectors.

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 made amendments to the Customs Tariff, prohibiting the import of goods manufactured wholly, or in part, through forced labour. This action made Canada one of only two countries in the world (along with the US) to have a forced labour import prohibition in place. In addition, Canada's free trade agreements include obligations to address child and forced labour and Canada provides technical assistance to support partner countries in respecting these labour protections.

There is a shared mandate commitment among federal Ministers responsible for labour, public safety, international trade and federal procurement, to introduce legislation to eradicate forced labour from Canadian supply chains and to ensure that Canadian businesses operating abroad do not contribute to human rights abuses. Canada's federal budget released in March 2023 reinforced this commitment by announcing the federal government's intention to introduce legislation by 2024 to eradicate forced labour from Canadian supply chains and to strengthen the import ban on goods produced using forced labour.

Supply chain legislation would be a distinct but complementary measure to Canada's existing forced labour import ban. Supply chain legislation can be viewed as a tool that can help entities not run afoul of import prohibitions, as they undertake required steps to clean their supply chains.

In January 2021, Canada announced a suite of seven measures in response to concerns about human rights violations in China's Xinjiang region. Included in these measures was the Xinjiang Integrity Declaration (XID), which Canadian companies must sign prior to receiving support from Canada's Trade Commissioner Service if they are: sourcing directly or indirectly from Xinjiang or entities relying on Uyghur labour; established in Xinjiang; or seeking to engage in the Xinjiang market. The XID 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, and abides by all relevant laws. 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 2022, Global Affairs Canada continued to implement [Voices at Risk: Canada’s Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders](#). The Guidelines are a clear statement of Canada’s commitment to advancing respect for human rights, offering practical advice for officials at Canadian missions abroad and at headquarters to promote respect for and support the vital work of human rights defenders. The Guidelines 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 often at great risk to themselves, their loved ones and the organizations and movements they often represent. Canada’s support for human rights defenders includes, but is not limited to, working in multilateral forums, engaging with local authorities through bilateral diplomacy, leveraging partnerships, promoting RBC and supporting projects led by human rights defenders, including through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.

The Guidelines reflect Canada’s feminist foreign policy, including an understanding that 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.

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 in trade 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, through ongoing meaningful engagement with Canadians before, during and after trade negotiations, conducting comprehensive and ongoing GBA Plus of trade negotiations, expanding access to the benefits of trade for more Canadians through gender responsive and inclusive trade content in trade agreements, and engaging with international partners such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G7, G20 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation to promote and advance gender responsive and inclusive 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 foreign 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 RBC 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) 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 for dispute resolution

Canada's dispute resolution mechanisms are anchored in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Canada's dispute resolution mechanisms complement Canada's judicial system legal by offering accessible, low-cost pathways for parties to find resolution and remedy.

This includes:

The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE)

The CORE, established by the Canadian Government in 2019, has a mandate to promote respect for human rights and RBC with Canadian garment, mining and oil and gas companies operating outside of Canada. The CORE promotes the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational enterprises, and also provides sector-wide advice to Canadian companies. The CORE has a complaints mechanism through which individuals, communities and those that represent them can submit complaints about possible human rights abuses arising from the overseas operations of Canadian companies in the CORE's three sectors. The CORE works with complainants and companies to try and resolve disputes and facilitate access to remedy. For more information about the CORE, its operating procedures and complaint caseload, see the [CORE webpage](#).

Canada's National Contact Point (NCP)

Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) is a non-judicial mechanism mandated to help facilitate – through dialogue and mediation – the resolution of disputes around observance of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises by multinational enterprises operating in or from Canada. [Canada's NCP](#) can address complaints touching on the wide range of areas covered by the OECD Guidelines including human rights, the environment, and employment and industrial relations, among others. The NCP offers a forum for constructive dialogue between parties, and aims to foster discussion leading towards a mutually acceptable resolution of the issues raised. Canada's NCP is an interdepartmental committee of eight federal departments. Global Affairs Canada chairs the NCP, with Natural Resources Canada as vice-chair.

If Canadian companies do not participate in the NCP process, or if the NCP determines that they do not engage in good faith or constructively in the course of or follow-up to the review process, the NCP can recommend the withdrawal of all Trade Commissioner Service support and that Export Development Canada and the Canadian Commercial Corporation also withdraw future support.

It should be noted that neither the CORE nor the NCP replace laws or local processes. Bringing a complaint to the CORE or NCP does not preclude a party from pursuing a complaint in other fora.

In 2022, the NCP concluded two (2) specific instances including one linked to the mining sector. While the NCP did not offer mediation nor dialogue facilitation in that case, it did issue recommendations to the parties, and offered to assist the parties by acting as an observer at future dialogues.

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 periodic verification presentations, which covers Canada's general international development assistance in support of responsible natural resource governance, and engagement efforts in the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

C. Promotion/Implementation

10. Public communication of commitment to the Voluntary Principles

- RBC and CSR websites maintained by Global Affairs Canada and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles (Canada.gc.ca/responsible-business and <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/home> respectively).
- Various communications products are used by Canadian embassies and headquarters to promote the Voluntary Principles during RBC initiatives targeting the extractive sector and more generally throughout the year.
- In 2022, 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. For instance:

- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) is the leading government ministry responsible for ensuring Canada's natural resources are developed sustainably, competitively, and inclusively. In December 2022, the Global Battery Alliance released child and human rights indices which NRCan helped develop. The indices are the world's first frameworks to measure and score the efforts of any company or product specific to the battery value chain towards supporting the elimination of child labour and respecting human rights. NRCan's

signature tool, [the CRS Checklist for Canadian Mining Companies Working Abroad](#) references the VPs.

- As described in #3, Global Affairs Canada has engaged in a national multi-stakeholder 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.
- Global Affairs Canada participates in the activities of 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.
- Global Affairs Canada also participates every year to the [Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's international conference](#), where human rights issues are discussed in several sessions.
- Both Global Affairs Canada and Natural Resources Canada take part to the annual Mining Day on the Hill in Ottawa; which provides an opportunity for high-level government officials 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 internationally recognised RBC 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

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 training and

webinars on specific RBC themes to officers at Canadian embassies, at headquarters, and at key international trade events. Information on the Voluntary Principles continues to be included in existing and newly developed training courses and reference material for Canadian Trade Commissioners based in Canada and abroad. In 2022, internal seminars and training on RBC and anti-corruption reached over 250 participants in Canada and abroad.

The Trade Strategy and Responsible Business Practices Division in Global Affairs Canada hosts an inter-departmental and an intra-departmental Community of Practice on RBC. These groups offer the opportunity to share information related to RBC, including on human rights issues within supply chains and on the extractives sector and the Voluntary Principles.

13. Coordination in-country around the Voluntary Principles

In 2022, Canada continued to be actively engaged in the VPI In-Country Working Groups.

- Ghana: The Embassy of Canada is a member of the Ghana VPs Working Group. During fall 2022, along with various diplomatic missions, Canada participated in a lunch hosted by the Voluntary Principles Initiative Secretariat where galamsey (illegal small scale mining) and its impact in the mining communities and on water and land resources was discussed.
- 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.
- Peru: The Embassy of Canada met with the Swiss, Australian, Dutch and UK missions and local private sector and NGO partners to reinvigorate the national working group on VPs in November 2022. Canada hosted the second meeting of the group in January 2023 (initially scheduled for December 2022 but delayed due to the political crisis). The group is revising the Terms of Reference created more than 12 years ago and exploring the possibility of becoming a formal working group.

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

Burkina Faso: As part of the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations between Canada and Burkina Faso, the Embassy of Canada organized an information and experience-sharing workshop on RBC. The workshop provided an opportunity to share Canada's RBC approach and experience in mining with key stakeholders such as companies, mining authorities, mine site communities and civil society

organizations. The Voluntary Principles were discussed in various presentations and the mission also shared promotional material on the Voluntary Principles in the conference room where the workshop was held.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): The Embassy of Canada is an active member of the in-country working groups and participated in different meetings and activities. In 2022, the Embassy hosted meetings of the VPI working group. The Embassy also promoted the VPI in wider discussions of the mining industry in DRC. The Embassy of Canada encouraged DRC's Minister of Human Rights to attend the Initiative's Annual Plenary Meeting in Toronto in 2022. When meeting with officials of DRC's Ministry of Mines, the Embassy of Canada encouraged greater coordination with the DRC's Ministry of Human Rights on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

Ecuador: The Embassy of Canada led several RBC initiatives in 2022, including a workshop organized for experts at Ecuador's Ministry of Energy on mining operations in watersheds and protected forests. Canada's Ambassador also leads a group of missions that includes the US, UK, Australia, Peru, and Chile on mining initiatives and outreach to the government on a wide range of topics, including equitable distribution of royalties and the creation of a framework for prior informed consent and human rights.

Mexico: As one of its RBC initiatives, the Embassy of Canada brought the Mining Association of Canada (MAC) to the International Mining Congress held in Hermosillo, Sonora, in October 2022. During that visit, the President of MAC promoted "Towards Sustainable Mining-TSM", a globally recognized sustainability program that supports mining companies in managing key environmental and social responsibilities to the Mexican mining industry and government representatives. Following this engagement with MAC in Hermosillo, the Mexican Mining Chamber (CAMIMEX), adopted MAC's TSM initiative. The official signing ceremony took place during the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada 2023 convention. In addition to that initiative, the Embassy also enhanced the dialogue, and provided a safe space for the Wixárika Regional Council, representatives of the Wixárika indigenous group, to establish a dialogue with Canadian company First Majestic Silver Corp. The Regional Council explicitly asked that the Embassy act as mediator of this dialogue and that the meeting was held within the Embassy's facilities.

Mozambique: The Embassy of Canada continued to accompany the VPI process in Mozambique and was pleased by important advances in-country for the national working group, the regional working group in Cabo Delgado, and relations with the VPI membership and executive globally. The working group is still financially supported by the UK, US, and Switzerland, and implemented by DCAF (Switzerland) and CDD (Mozambique). Canada spoke at the national working group launch in February, assisted the Ministry of Justice event where President Nyusi endorsed the VPIs, and assisted two representatives from said Ministry to attend the annual VPI conference in Toronto (along with the head of CDD). From September, Canada assisted DCAF in preparations for the November visit of a VPI delegation, led by the UK with members from NGOs in the US, Switzerland, and Nigeria to an exploratory mission in Maputo and Pemba. Canada co-funded a reception (along with US/UK/Switzerland) for the visiting delegation and spoke about our commitment to the initiative and its core values. Thanks in part to this cooperative advocacy work, Mozambique is on the cusp of submitting its application to the VPI for full country membership.

Panama: In 2022, the Embassy of Canada worked with the national government under the Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP) program to strengthen individual human resources and institutional

capacity in the mining sector while supporting gender-sensitive and environmentally sustainable policies. As part of this initiative, a one-week training course for government officials was organized in Panama, followed by an in-Canada mine visit. The Embassy also organized a best practices webinar on Canada's regulatory framework, industry leadership in sustainability and green mining innovation, in collaboration with Natural Resources Canada and the Mining Association of Canada. Finally, the Embassy provided financial support to the Panamanian Mining Chamber (CAMIPA) to assess how the Mining Association of Canada's Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) standard could be adapted and applied in the Panamanian context. The

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 RBC 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 abroad to implement Canada's RBC approach and advise Canadian firms on responsible business practice. This includes advising natural resource companies on the Voluntary Principles and their 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 RBC 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 RBC 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 Canadian missions abroad 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 RBC Strategy and international guidelines and best practices, including the Voluntary Principles.

Through our embassies, companies can have access to support for implementation of RBC 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 outline a risk-based approach and provide 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, in which Canada also participates, 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, and contributed 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.

In addition, Canada also supports the work of NGOs in conflict areas, including on issues related to natural resource management, and is 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

The International Police Peacekeeping and Peace Operations (IPP) Program is jointly managed by Global Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Public Safety Canada. Canadian Policing members are deployed to international peace support operations or other stabilization efforts helping overseas efforts are an essential part of Canada's goal of building a more secure world by working to stabilize fragile and conflict-affected states. The international deployment of highly-trained Canadian police officers contributes to reducing crime, instability, and fragility in countries where they are engaged. In March 2021, the IPP Program was renewed for five years, until 2026.

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. Deployed Canadian police support institutional reforms, the re-establishment of the rule of law, and the consolidation of peace among other activities. Supporting the development of professional policing services around the world creates a safer and more stable global environment. Canadian police, in cooperation with international partners such as the United Nations and the European Union, or bilaterally with a host country, pave the way for this long-term development. Through the IPP, Canadian policing members are deployed to Haiti, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine, and the West Bank, as well as to the UN Institute for

Training and Research (UNITAR) in Switzerland, the International Criminal Court in The Netherlands, and a Senior Police Advisor to Canada's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York.

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.

For more information: [The International Police Peacekeeping and Peace Operations Program \(publicsafety.gc.ca\)](http://publicsafety.gc.ca)

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 RBC 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:

- The strategic evaluation spotlighted the solid foundation on which the VPI has built, as well as many recognized strengths that we can continue to develop, in particular this successful network for learning and sharing of good practices across the private sector, civil society and government pillars.

- There are opportunities to streamline the efficiencies of the governance structure of the VPI, particularly with regard to administrative matters. This should enable the Steering Committee to focus on broader, more strategic issues facing the initiative.
- In the context of legislation on human rights due diligence which is being developed in various jurisdictions, outreach to stakeholders (and in particular to governments) should demonstrate the benefits of a smart-mix balanced approach that combines mandatory and voluntary measures.

Opportunities in the coming year:

- Canada plans to pursue and conclude its chairmanship by securing important preliminary changes in the governance structure. This will lay the groundwork for the incoming chair to build on the progress made by the Steering Committee at the December 2022 strategic retreat in pursuing reforms that may be more substantial.
- Canada looks forward to continue engaging collaboratively in measures aimed at strengthening and improving the VPI and enabling it to keep pace in an evolving world.