

# LITE-Africa 2024 Annual Report

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### Commitment to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

#### 1. Describe how you have engaged in the Voluntary Principles Initiative over the past year.

LITE-Africa and the Nigerian Working Group on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights have continued to advocate for promoting, protecting, and respecting human rights across the three pillars of the VPs. The NWG was able to organize the planned four (4) quarterly meetings with administrative support from LITE-Africa and the Swiss Embassy in Nigeria. The meetings were held in Abuja, the state capital of Nigeria, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission, it provided opportunities for the group to strategize on programs and engagements for the year to create awareness of the VPI and encourage the government of Nigeria to sign into the VPI. Within this reporting period of January 2024 to December 2024, LITE-Africa participated fully in the following meetings:

- LITE-Africa was represented at the VPI plenary in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., in May 2024. The Nigerian government, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), was also present.
- The Co-Chair of the Nigeria Working Group, who is also the Executive Director of LITE-Africa, was a panelist in the discussion by the in-country working groups (ICWG) on their activities and the security and human rights situation in Nigeria.
- The Executive Director of LITE-Africa attended the strategic retreat in the U.S. on the 17th and 18th of October, 2024.

#### 2. Describe efforts to increase transparency, both internally and externally, regarding your efforts to implement or support implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

LITE-Africa has a catalog of reports for its engagements in the NWG and VPI. Their involvement and call for action are documented and shared with its staff members, the NWG, and its official website where applicable.

LITE-Africa believes the transparency of its affairs has been the backbone of the sincere collaboration across the NGO Pillar, the Corporate Pillar of the NWG, and its collaboration with the NHRC and relevant government bodies.

The outcome of the baseline assessment funded by DCAF is a more recent example of LITE-Africa's transparency level as the results of the assessment after validation were presented to the NWG in the presence of project-community representative, also presented to the larger NGO community in Nigeria present in the country's capital and government officials for deliberation and improvement to enhance the VPI implementation.

List of provided meeting reports within this reporting period:

- Report of the Advocacy Engagements to NHRC, MOJ, and MFA on efforts to get Nigeria to sign on to the global VP Initiative, held on 15th and 16th July 2024.
- The Report of the 3rd quarterly coordination meeting of the Nigerian Working Group held in Abuja on 30th July 2024.
- The Report of the 4th quarterly coordination meeting of the Nigerian Working Group held in Abuja on the 22nd October 2024

### **3. Describe any efforts to engage in dialogue with other participants of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.**

LITE-Africa and Motherhen Foundation engaged members of the CSO Pillar, and other NGOs in the Northern Region to introduce the VPI to them. The meeting was held virtually to create awareness among non-member NGOs of the working group in the Northern Region of Nigeria to inform CSOs of the VPI to inform participation and membership and also share the successes of the events and activities of the NWG.

LITE-Africa collaborated with members of the corporate pillar (Total Energies and Shell to improve their security guidelines and also to deliver training to their on-site personnel.

LITE-Africa and the NWG made an advocacy visit to the National Human Rights Commission to facilitate an advocacy engagement with the government through the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the 15th and 16th of July 2024, LITE-Africa engaged with the NHRC MoJ, and MFA in its efforts to set up a meeting with the government of Nigeria to sign up to the VPI.

## **Procedures**

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

Verification processes were conducted on Partner Africa, Sazani and Usalama. After the voting by the NGO Pillar members, Usalama was recommended for consideration as an Engaged member while Partner Africa and Sazani were not recommended because their organisations profile qualify them as consultants/social enterprise based on the policy documents that defines NGOs as developed by the NGO Pillar.

## **Promotion of the Voluntary Principles**

### **5. Describe your efforts to raise awareness of and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles with both internal and external stakeholders.**

LITE-Africa and Motherhen Foundation engaged members of the CSO Pillar, and other NGOs in the Northern Region to introduce the VPI to them and to create awareness among non-member NGOs of the working group in the Northern Region of Nigeria.

LITE-Africa received a grant from DCAF on a project; "Strengthen Regional Implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Nigeria"; this project was carried out in 8 states across Nigeria, 4 states in the Northern region (Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, and Zamfara) and 4 states in the Southern region (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Lagos, and Rivers) The project's activities included: Community Awareness Sessions on VPs, Baseline Assessment on the level of implementation of the VPs in the Northern and Southern Nigeria, training on VPSHR to create more knowledge and awareness of the VPs and a National Workshop on the findings of the Baseline Study involving the government, CSOs, and companies.

LITE-Africa collaborated with members of the corporate pillar to deliver training activities for; Chevron, Total Energy, and Nigerian Breweries security personnel.

### **6. Describe efforts to engage and facilitate participation of non-member CSOs, affected communities, and other relevant stakeholders in the Annual Plenary Meeting or workshops.**

LITE-Africa has been at the forefront of increasing awareness of the voluntary principles across Nigeria. Several awareness workshops were held in various parts of communities in Nigeria, especially in the Abia,

Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Delta, Gombe, Kaduna, Lagos, Rivers and Zamfara. During the reporting period, sensitization activities were also carried out with companies where we facilitated VPSHR training for security personnel. In the course of implementing the DCAF Project non-member CSOs were sensitized and engaged in the project to facilitate sensitization activities in communities within their states among the states mentioned above. The government agencies sensitized on VP implementation were encouraged to participate in the annual plenary.

In the course of sensitizing the various pillars of the VP efforts were made to elaborate on the benefits of participating in the VP Workshop and annual plenary. The requirements and date of the events were circulated to all the three pillars sensitized. Funding for travel participation was the major challenge for them to participate in the annual plenary. However, for VP workshops in Nigeria organized by LITE-Africa and other NWG members, we ensured adequate notices were circulated for interested persons and organizations to attend.

## **7. Describe your efforts to promote the adoption of the Voluntary Principles into relevant government of corporate policies, as well as international standards and/or guidelines.**

The NWG and LITE-Africa made an advocacy visit to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to help facilitate an advocacy engagement with the government through the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

LITE-Africa and the NWG have continued to advocate for Nigeria's membership of the VPI working closely with the National Human Rights Commission, and the Ministry of Foreign.

Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and other stakeholders. The NWG in collaboration with the NHRC had written letters to the Nigerian government through the MOJ and MFA. The MFA and MOJ also developed a memo which was submitted to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) for deliberations and consideration to join the global VP initiative.

LITE-Africa and the NWG through the multistakeholder workshop of CSOs and government officials presented the draft baseline report on Strengthening Regional Implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Nigeria for deliberation and inputs, to further seek increased involvement of the three pillars especially the Nigerian government to sign into the global VPI.

## **Country Implementation**

### **8. Describe efforts to strengthen the rule of law in the countries where you work.**

Nigeria as a leading voice in the implementation of the rule of law in Africa is taking steps to improve respect for the rule of law, protection of citizens, and justice for those whose rights have been violated. The CSOs and other individuals are calling on the government to strengthen the implementation of the rule of law to ensure that citizens, organisations, and government are made accountable to the law. Several cases of corruption and abuse have been taken to the courts for judicial adjudication. Some corrupt officials have been made to forfeit properties acquired through corrupt practices. The voices of CSOs and individuals are loud against the above and corruption in Nigeria calling for government and citizens accountability to the rule of law.

### **9. Describe efforts to conduct and monitor risk assessments for potential human rights violations in the areas where you work.**

LITE-Africa sensitized citizens and organisations on the benefits and processes for the conduct and monitor of risk assessments in their communities and areas of operations for potential human rights violations including processes to prevent human rights abuse and report cases of human rights violations. During the implementation of the DCAF Project during this reporting period, LITE-Africa presented scenarios to community members, companies, and government officials on the need and benefits of risk assessments.

## **10. Describe your efforts to strengthen policies, procedures and guidelines related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.**

LITE-Africa spear-headed advocacy engagements with the Nigeria Working Group (NWG) on Voluntary Principles to the NHRC, CSO pillar members of the NWG jointly visited the Executive Secretary (E.S.) of the NHRC to foster an advocacy visit to the MoJ and the MFA to enable Nigeria sign on to the VPI.

On the 15th and 16th of July 2024, the NWG had an advocacy engagement with government ministries that included the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Human Rights Commission on the issue of human rights violations in the extractives and for further deliberations towards the push to get Nigeria to sign up for the global VPI.

In the Multistakeholder dialogue workshop held to share the draft report of the regional baseline study on VPs, the workshop examined the draft report with the findings and recommendations, and the CSOs and government officials came up with additional recommendations for potential policy adjustments for more effective regulation and oversight of the extractive industry, increase VP awareness, and propel Nigeria to sign up to the VPI.

## **11. Describe your efforts to engage with or support engagement with the public security sectors and/or private security sectors in the countries where you work.**

LITE-Africa anchored VPSHR training with the Nigerian Breweries; in Lagos, Kaduna, where over 200 security personnel were trained. LITE-Africa also reviewed the training guidelines for Chevron Nigeria in line with VPI which was used to train over 268 security personnel which included both private and public security personnel working with Chevron Nigeria.

Through the DCAF funding, the NWG worked in 8 project states of the federation (Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Lagos, Rivers, and Zamfara) created and increased awareness of the VPs and VP implementation and carried out security and human rights training (VPSHR) for selected community representatives, private and public security, government officials, extractive companies, CSOs, Media and other stakeholders in Nigeria.

## **12. Describe efforts to hold Voluntary Principles participants accountable for upholding their roles and responsibilities as members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.**

Corporate pillars members of the NWG whose companies have signed up to the global VPI have constantly taken responsibility to uphold their roles and responsibilities as members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative by carrying out due diligence and risk assessment in all their areas of operations and regularly build the capacity of their staff especially security personnel on VPSHR to prevent abuse and promote human rights in their areas of operations.

As the government of Nigeria has not signed up to the global VPI it is a challenge to hold many other companies who have not signed up to the VPI accountable for rights violations as it becomes more demanding to prove abuse cases against them. However, there are adequate laws in Nigeria but government agencies that are saddled with the enforcement of the rules and regulations are not doing enough. The process of encouraging and enforcing compliance is been undertaken seriously.

# **Lessons & Issues**

## **13. Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization.**

One of the challenges encountered by the Nigerian Working Group in the implementation of the VPs process in Nigeria is the low level of awareness of VPs in Nigeria, a greater number of security personnel including private and public, oil companies, mining companies, and CSOs, and government officials. The strategy planned by the NWG is to include media broadcasts to create more awareness, seek funds to facilitate more awareness campaigns in areas where there is little or no media coverage in the country and continue hosting the NWG quarterly coordination meeting and Annual.

National Conference on VPs to further increase awareness of VP implementation in Nigeria.

There is the potential for setting up regional working groups to bring awareness of the VPs closer to the people due to the large size of Nigeria and the population. The NWG also plans to continue its outreach training of other critical stakeholders of VPs through its members.

The NGO pillar members will continue to facilitate training to private and public security personnel and other stakeholders, for example, the corporate pillars often provide support to the NGO pillar members as part of its strategy to promote the implementation of the VP framework in its operation/facility. This helps the NGOs to train public and private personnel deployed to the oil companies' facilities.