Governments and the Voluntary Principles
on Security and Human Rights

The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights are a set of principles designed to guide companies in maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that encourages respect for human rights, while helping companies work effectively with governments that seek to protect human rights. The Voluntary Principles are a useful tool for all governments with interests in the operations of the extractive industries and can help contribute to the protection of human rights and the prevention of conflict.

Benefits of joining the Voluntary Principles:

Achieving human rights, development and conflict-related policy objectives

- Companies often interact with public or private security providers that seek to protect company operations and employees. If appropriate training and other measures for security providers are not in place, human rights abuses can occur. Systematic use of the Voluntary Principles can help reduce the risk of such violations. This also assists all governments in fulfilling their duty to protect human rights, promotes better business environments and reduces costs related to insecurity.

- Implementation of the Voluntary Principles is an important step in promoting transparency and good corporate social responsibility practices. It can support other government policy objectives such as development, poverty alleviation, investment and conflict prevention.

Improving collaboration and problem solving with companies and civil society

Through formal participation in the Voluntary Principles process, governments, NGOs and companies develop working relationships through which they can collaborate to:

- Share information and participate in dialogue regarding challenges in Voluntary Principles implementation.

- Engage in mutual learning and joint problem solving with a group that is well versed in security and human rights issues.

- Create joint approaches and partnerships to address the challenges of security and human rights at the international, national and project level.

- Jointly promote human rights in order to provide lasting positive impact on security and human rights issues.

- Develop publicly available tools that will help define best practice for security and human rights.

Government roles under the Voluntary Principles include:

- Promoting understanding and implementation of the Voluntary Principles with companies and civil society headquartered or operating within national territory, as well as with other governments.

- Regularly conducting outreach with other governments to encourage them to join the Voluntary Principles.

- Working with stakeholders – including within their own government, other countries, companies and civil society – on the ground to assist them in their Voluntary Principles implementation. Activities can include, but are not limited to, playing a coordinating role with interested parties, providing information (such as at missions), working jointly on human rights training and engaging with involved parties.

- Engaging with stakeholders at the international level to coordinate efforts, encourage the implementation of the Voluntary Principles, share best practices and promote discussion and learning through case studies.

- Reporting annually on activities to support Voluntary Principles implementation.

- Formally participating in the governance of the Voluntary Principles.

For more information, please visit
http://voluntaryprinciples.org.

VOLUNTARY
PRINCIPLES
ON SECURITY + HUMAN RIGHTS