

# New Nigeria Foundation's 2023 VPI Annual Report

## 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.

New

Nigeria Foundation (NNF) remained committed to the Voluntary Principles Initiative in 2023 and engaged in its activities. The Foundation's engagements cut across several activities and events organised by the VPs Secretariat, Steering Committee, Nigeria Working Group (NWG), and the Foundation. Though NNF did not secure any specific funding for VPs projects from the Secretariat or other funders of VPs activities, the Foundation was determined to utilise every opportunity in any of its ongoing projects to advance the course of the VPs. Such an opportunity was the PIND/Ford Foundation Bridges project. The Foundation trained 22 CSOs in April 2023 on adapting the VPs in implementing programmes in Nigeria's new petroleum industry law.

NNF set up a regional working group in October 2023 in the Southwest region of Nigeria to promote knowledge of the VPs in the area. The inaugural meeting attracted CSOs and actors operating in the mining sector in the region. NNF made a presentation on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR), and there was also a Q&A session at the meeting. The group will continue to create awareness of the VPs among stakeholders in mining and commercial agriculture in the region.

New

Nigeria Foundation attended the 2023 Annual Plenary Meeting of the Voluntary Principles Initiative held in London, United Kingdom, from May 23 to May 26, 2023, including participating in planning meetings and other engagements leading up to the Plenary. While at the Annual Plenary, the Foundation attended all events, including the NGO Pillar, the Steering Committee, and the Plenary meetings. As a Steering Committee (StC) member, NNF engaged with and participated in all StC meetings and reviews, including the 2023-2026 strategy development, and deliberated and approved requests presented by the Secretariat.

In addition, the Foundation served as a reviewer

during the Alcoa Verification Presentation on VPs' implementation. Also, NNF participated in the review of applications to VPI by new members from Nigeria. NNF participated in all NGO Pillar meetings organised in 2023.

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

NNF participated in meetings and activities aimed at increasing transparency. The Foundation participated in sessions where reports from corporate and government pillars were presented to the Initiative. NNF was one of the reviewers at Alcoa's verification presentation. Also in the reporting period, NNF attended the other verification presentations delivered by engaged and full members, including the:

1.  
Implementation  
reporting meeting presented by Gemfields towards full membership of the corporate pillar. Gemfields presented its successes and challenges in executing its implementation plan.
  
2.  
Verification  
presentation on VPs implementation by Canacol Energy.
  
3.  
Verification  
presentation on VPs implementation by the Government of Australia
  
4.  
NNF read  
incident reports by corporate members, e.g. Dinant report of an incident regarding the illegal invasion of its Arizona Plantation in Honduras
  
5.  
Newcrest  
verification presentation on VPs implementation

6.  
Fortescue  
verification presentation on VPs implementation

7.  
Endeavour  
Mining verification presentation on VPs implementation

8.  
DRC VPI  
implementation report briefing

9.  
Participation in a teleconference in respect of Gran  
Tierra's application for corporate membership

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

NNF participated in the strategic discussions on the Governance Options Paper to strengthen the VPI's governance arrangements. Following the creation of the Working Group, the Foundation joined and participated in the mapping and implementation subgroups. The mapping subgroup involved mapping legislation, organisations, and their guidance to examine the emerging due diligence legislation landscape related to the VPs and, subsequently, to strengthen current VPI implementation guidance. NNF attended the webinars introducing new tools like the IGT Companion Tool - Operationalising the Voluntary Principles through the lens of protecting and respecting the unique needs and rights of women and other disadvantaged groups and the resources on strengthening the protection of Human Rights Defenders. The resources include Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders by Bennett Freeman Associates LLC, and Understanding the Unique Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa by LITE-Africa. NNF participated in the survey of all VPI members to inform the 2023 Steering Committee Retreat.

The Foundation is working with the Nigeria Working Group on the VPs to reinvigorate a process that will see Nigeria joining the Initiative.

The group has commenced engagement with officials of the new administration in Nigeria on joining the VPI.

The NWG updated the new Attorney General of the Federation on the efforts to get Nigeria to join the VPI during the last administration. NNF regularly

participated in meetings and events/activities of the Nigeria Working Group held in 2023. Similarly, NNF participated in the webinar Commissioners Speak About the Strategic Direction of the VPI.

## **PROCEDURES**

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

## **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.**

NNF promoted the awareness of the VPs by embedding it in its activities under the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). The Foundation also publishes VPs activities in its quarterly Newsletters and on the Foundation's website. VPs activities also constitute part of the annual report rendered to the directors of the Foundation.

To understand their human rights challenges, NNF undertook a quantitative survey in communities surrounding the newly established refinery and other extractive industries in Ibeju-Lekki communities, Lagos, Nigeria.

### **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.**

The Annual Plenary meeting of the VPs was explained to participants at the inauguration of the Southwest region working group on the VPs. CSOs working in the mining sector in the region, especially those managed by women, expressed interest in participating in the Initiative's Annual Plenary meeting.

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

NNF made a presentation on Voluntary Principles – Protecting and respecting the rights of those we work with during a capacity-building workshop for CSOs in the Niger Delta held in April 2023. The presentation focused on promoting human rights consciousness when undertaking needs assessment or developing a community development plan. NNF encouraged participants to familiarise themselves with the various guidelines provided by the VPI, which are freely accessible on the

Initiatives' website.

NNF has continued to use the opportunity provided under the new Petroleum Industry Act in Nigeria to sensitise stakeholders on the VPs during the onboarding events organised for representatives of communities and regulators.

## **COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION**

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

The Foundation continued its advocacy against human rights violations by the security forces. The Foundation shares the outcomes of its security webinar series on social media and through its in-house publications.

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

### **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.**

NNF and other members of ICoCA Nigeria participated in the planning meetings for election monitoring programme during Nigeria's general elections in 2023. The aim was to introduce the Private Security sector to election monitoring in Nigeria. The planning meeting also strategised on ways to approach the electoral body in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for additional roles and responsibilities for PSCs in election security.

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

NNF and other members of NWG regularly share their practical experiences on VPs implementation during NWG meetings. Participants share their challenges and contributions are made by members on the implications of such actions and how to resolve the issues and avoid reoccurrence in the future.

## **LESSONS AND ISSUES**

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

The Foundation continues to use VP training materials to create awareness among Host

Community Development Trusts (HCDTs) about human rights and business. The HCDT system is the new governance structure in the liquid mineral sector of the Nigerian economy under the PIA.