



# VPSHR

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES  
SECURITY  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

## IN MOZAMBIQUE *BULLETIN*

PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE ON BUSINESS, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN CABO DELGADO

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# Mozambique may apply to join the Voluntary Principles Initiative next September

The Republic of Mozambique is preparing the application process to join the Voluntary Principles Initiative. Mozambique's application process has the technical support of the CDD and DCAF, which have already hired a consultant for the purpose. As part of the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, an initiative led by the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, the CDD is responsible for the Secretariat while the Geneva Security Sector Governance Center (DCAF) provides technical support.





Sébastien Caldana

Mozambique's intention to become an engaged member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative was expressed in 2021, and for the last two years, the Government has been using the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, which are a set of standards that guide companies in the extractive industries and governments in managing their security operations to reduce the risk of incidents and human rights abuses.

Despite being an important step, Mozambique's adherence to the Voluntary Principles Initiative does not, by itself, guarantee the improvement of human rights in the extractive sector. There needs to be a broader national effort led by the Government to improve the human rights environment.

The candidacy process for joining the Voluntary Principles Initiative presupposes several steps, as explained by Sébastien Caldana, from DCAF, who was speaking last week during the 6th Meeting of the National Working Group, held in Maputo City. "The country must identify a focal point, a government representative who

will liaise with the Voluntary Principles Initiative. In the case of Mozambique, the focal point is the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs".

Once the focal point is identified, the country must send a letter of intent to the Secretariat of the Voluntary Principles Initiative expressing its desire to join the Initiative. The letter should explain why the country wants to join the Voluntary Principles Initiative and state its commitment to the Initiative's principles. "The application must include information on the country's policies and practices related to human rights, as well as the action plan developed during the self-assessment process".

The evaluation of a candidacy for joining the Voluntary Principles Initiative takes six months and the final decision is taken at the meetings of the members of the Initiative that take place in May. Assuming that Mozambique will submit its candidacy in September, its admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative could happen in May 2023.

"If the Secretariat of the Initiative determines



Elone Chichava

that Mozambique meets the membership criteria, the application will be approved. This will allow the country to learn more about the Initiative and engage with other Initiative members. The country will then be required to participate in regular reporting and monitoring to ensure it is complying with the Initiative's principles."

Sébastien Caldana also referred that joining the Initiative is just the first step, as the Government must develop a National Action Plan and train relevant actors to implement the Voluntary Principles. "The National Action Plan should outline specific measures the government will take to promote the Voluntary Principles and encourage extractive industry companies to respect human rights."

Still, within the scope of the process of joining the Initiative, Sébastien Caldana explained that the Government must train relevant actors for the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles, including Police and Army agents, community leaders, and personnel from extractive companies. "It is important for the Government to monitor the implementation of

the Voluntary Principles to ensure that they are followed. This involves regular inspections, community consultations, and the use of independent monitors to identify and address any human rights violations."

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Elone Chichava referred that the Government started the dialogue on the Voluntary Principles with full awareness of the challenges that the country faces in terms of protection and promotion of human rights, namely in the framework of social responsibility and business activities of extractive companies in local communities.

Still, Mozambique has taken some positive steps to promote and protect human rights, such as the ratification of international human rights treaties and the establishment of national institutions to monitor and promote human rights, such as the National Human Rights Commission.

The representative of the Ministry of Justice noted that Mozambique's adherence to the Voluntary Principles Initiative will help in the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles. "By



Professor Adriano Nuvunga

demonstrating a commitment to human rights, Mozambique can build stronger relationships with other countries and organizations that share similar values. Joining the Voluntary Principles Initiative can help Mozambique to promote and protect human rights, improve the business environment, and strengthen its international reputation”.

Professor Adriano Nuvunga, Executive Director of the CDD, spoke of the responsibility of the Government and the business sector in respecting human rights, but also of the importance of community development.

“Exploitation of natural resources in Mozambique can generate significant revenue for the Government and private companies, but these benefits often do not reach the local communities that host these resources. By involving communities, we can ensure that their interests are represented and that they receive a fair share of the benefits generated by the exploitation of these resources. Profit and income must also re-

sult in the development of communities”.

Regarding Mozambique’s adherence to the Voluntary Principles Initiative, Prof Nuvunga understands that the decision will help build trust between local communities, companies, and the Government. “By working together to implement the Voluntary Principles, stakeholders can engage in constructive dialogue and find ways to address concerns and complaints in a transparent and accountable manner. Mozambique’s decision to adhere to the Voluntary Principles is an important step towards promoting responsible and sustainable extractive industry practices and protecting the rights of local communities”.

The VI Meeting of the National Working Group on the Voluntary Principles also provided a space for the presentation of the progress of activities in Cabo Delgado and a debate on the broader context of security and human rights. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Government, private sector, and civil society.





#### EDITORIAL INFORMATION

**Property:** CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento  
**Director:** Prof. Adriano Nuvunga  
**Editor:** Emídio Beula  
**Author:** Hélio Siteo  
**Layout:** CDD

**Address:**  
Rua Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.  
Telephone: +258 21 085 797

 CDD\_moz  
**E-mail:** [info@cddmoz.org](mailto:info@cddmoz.org)  
**Website:** <http://www.cddmoz.org>

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