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VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES
SECURITY
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IN MOZAMBIQUE *BULLETIN*

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

GUARDIÃO DA DEMOCRACIA | www.cddmoz.org

Sunday, November 28, 2021 | Year 1, Number 18 | Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga | English

National Working Group on Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights established in Mozambique

- Since 24 November, Mozambique has had a National Working Group on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, an entity that will be responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of the Voluntary Principles, improving the involvement and coordination of stakeholders. The National Working Group was established at the roundtable organized by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, following the recommendations of the event organized last July by the two institutions, with the support of the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF).



- The British High Commission in Mozambique, which has been working with CDD in raising awareness on the importance of the Voluntary Principles for Mozambique, reaffirmed its commitment to support the National Working Group on the Voluntary Principles. Switzerland and Canada, two Member States of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, also expressed, through their diplomatic representations, their interest in supporting the National Working Group in the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles in Mozambique. CDD, representing civil society, and the National Directorate for Human Rights and Citizenship, representing the Ministry of Justice, will be responsible for the Secretariat of the National Working Group on the Voluntary Principles, and will be supported by DCAF.



The National Working Group comprises (1) the Government, represented by the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Land and Environment, Ministry of Public Works, Housing and Water Resources and Ministry of Industry and Trade; (2) Multilateral bodies - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Committee of the Red Cross and the

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); (3) Civil society - represented by the CDD (responsible for the Secretariat of the Group, together with the National Directorate of Human Rights and Citizenship); (4) Private sector (which should indicate its representatives).

In addition to advocating for Mozambique's accession to the Voluntary Principles Initiative, the National Working Group will undertake concrete and extensive outreach to the international private sector to ensure that in carrying out its security maintenance activities it ensures



Alan Bryden, DCAF



Edson Chichongue, ACIS



Justino Tonela, Ministry of Justice



Anibal Fernando, Ministry of National Defense

the protection and respect of human rights in communities. The field activities of the National Working Group on Voluntary Principles are expected to start in March next year.

"A National Working Group on Voluntary Principles can provide a specific focus on security and human rights issues in the extractive sector. It can also ensure coherence with other relevant initiatives in the field of business and human rights, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and in the area of extractive sector governance, such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative," Alan Bryden highlighted, representative of the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF).

DCAF is an international foundation committed to good governance of the security sector and has supported the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights for over 10 years.

Alan Bryden highlighted the importance of establishing the National Working Group that has a broad base of representation, ranging from ministries, key human rights institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations, diplomatic representations and multilateral organisations committed to security development and respect for human rights.

"Government forces and company security forces need to be trained in Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. Monitoring is a very important tool in implementing the Voluntary Principles. It is important to link progress at the national level on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles with concrete actions on the ground. This is a trust-building process. The socialization and capacity building process should be replicated at many levels", Alan Bryden argued.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Justice,

Constitutional and Religious Affairs, jurist Justino Tonela argued that State institutions are engaged in strengthening respect and protection of human rights in communities where natural resource exploitation occurs. "The dialogue we initiated on the Voluntary Principles was based on the challenges we face in the protection and promotion of human rights, especially the corporate responsibility of companies. The Ministry of Justice advocates for Mozambique's accession to the Voluntary Principles and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights."

The Ministry of National Defence was represented by General Aníbal Fernando. "As part of the fight against violent extremism, there are times when the actions of our forces, especially the disproportionate use of force, end up violating the rights of the communities in Cabo Delgado. But whenever this happens we react promptly to correct it. Our operation is always to respect the constitutional principles and others set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," General Aníbal Fernando argued.

The National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), a partner of the CDD in the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles, spoke of the existence of "some tension" between government forces and the security forces of the companies that exploit gas in Cabo Delgado. "As the National Human Rights Commission, we are intervening to solve the problem," Luís Bitone, the President of the

CNDH, said.

Yet, Bitone noted that it is difficult to talk about human rights in Mozambique in a context where the exploitation of natural resources is being done intensively. "Total has a unit responsible for implementing the Voluntary Principles in the company's operations. It would be important for all natural resource exploitation companies to adopt the Voluntary Principles."

The private sector was represented by the Confederation of Business Associations of Mozambique (CTA) and the Association of Commerce, Industry and Services (ACIS). "There is an understanding by companies that good human rights practices promote harmony in their relationship with employees and communities. Today there is a consensus that doing business necessarily involves building a good relationship of trust with the communities. At ACIS level, there are companies that are working to implement standards aimed at protecting human rights," Edson Chichongue, Executive Director of ACIS, explained.

The representative of CTA argued that due to the situation of public insecurity in Mozambique, the private sector decided to create an area responsible for security to strengthen dialogue with the Government. Businessmen understand that for there to be a social acceptance of the natural resource exploitation projects, it is essential that the investments in this sector contribute to the development of the country, to the improvement of governance, and to the respect for human rights and welfare of citizens.

United Kingdom reaffirms support for the National Working Group on Voluntary Principles



Alexandra Sheppard, British High Commissioner in Mozambique

The UK Government is a founding member of the Voluntary Principles, an initiative that aims to get Government, the private sector and civil society working together to minimise the risks of human rights abuses and the occurrence of security-related incidents in communities, and to promote good corporate social responsibility practices.

The British Deputy - High Commissioner in Mozambique, Alexandra Sheppard, explained that the UK and Mozambique have been working together on the Voluntary Principles initiative to engage companies involved in natural resource exploitation on matters related to human rights. In 2019, the UK Human Rights Ambassador was in Mozambique and he held meetings with extractive companies working on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

In the first three months of this year, the UK Government worked with CDD on a project aimed at raising awareness of the importance of the Voluntary Principles for Mozambique, sharing international best practice and outlining

next steps to strengthen their implementation in Cabo Delgado and the country at large. It is a project that ensured the involvement of the Government, international partners, experts and all stakeholders, including operating companies and subcontractors in the oil and gas industry.

Therefore, the UK reaffirmed its commitment to support the National Working Group on the Voluntary Principles in Mozambique. Switzerland and Canada, two Member States of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, also expressed their interest in supporting the National Working Group on the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Mozambique. Canada is one of the countries that stands out for the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles, and Switzerland has already been working with Mozambican civil society, including the CDD, in supporting the social cohesion program in northern Mozambique, a region where violent extremist actions take place and where natural gas exploitation projects are concentrated.

“Mozambique’s accession to the Voluntary Principles will need to be complemented by a national effort to improve the human rights environment,” Alex Vines, Chatham House



Alex Vines

Last July, the British High Commission in Mozambique announced that Chatham House, a reputable institute for international studies based in London, would release an information note on the Voluntary Principles and their relevance for Mozambique, in addition to providing a basis for discussion for the National Working Group. The study was presented in Maputo, on Wednesday (24 November), by researcher Alex Vines, during the round table organized by CDD, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs.

Alex Vines began by recalling that Mozambique was the first African country to start work on a national action plan on Business and Human Rights, as a joint initiative between the Government and civil society, in 2013. “Mozambique has another opportunity to show leadership by adhering to the Voluntary Principles, thus becoming the second African State, after Ghana.” Worldwide, only 10 States have joined and

become members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, namely Argentina, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Ghana, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America (USA).

In addition to States, the list includes other members, namely 33 international companies, 14 non-governmental organizations and nine (9) observers (mostly international bodies). At least six multinationals operating in Mozambique have already adhered to the Voluntary Principles, namely ExxonMobil, Galp, Total Energies, Shell, BP, Vale and BHP Billiton. The Italian Eni and the British Gemfields are in the process of joining as corporate members.

Alex Vines warned that unilateral accession by companies to the Voluntary Principles can bring benefits such as improved safety management and a social licence of operations, but without comprehensive Government leadership these benefits are likely to be small-

-scale and inconsistent. "The Government's commitment to the Voluntary Principles and its engagement as a member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative enables cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, as well as access to lessons learned and the experiences and support of a transnational network."

The researcher argued that monitoring and accountability among parties is key to supporting accession to the Voluntary Principles. "This will require openness with respect to free reporting and critical journalism, transparency in decision-making, and improved domestic oversight mechanisms." Alex Vines acknowledged that while necessary, government accession to the Voluntary Principles is not enough

to change the trajectory of the extractive sector in Mozambique.

"Accession (by Mozambique) will need to be complemented by a broader national effort, led by the Government, to improve the human rights environment, including prioritizing human rights education for the population, State institutions and security forces, and implementing national training programmes to combat entrenched patterns of corruption and abuse. The effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles will not be easy. It will not be a one-time event, but rather a process. A process that requires sustained focus and a willingness to seek greater transparency and dialogue between government, the business sector and civil society."



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