

# Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Ghana

## Program Overview

The Voluntary Principles on Security & Human Rights (VPS) have become a widely-recognized industry standard for oil, gas, and mining companies to better ensure the human rights of communities affected by their operations around the world, particularly in relation to the provision of security. The VPs go beyond being simply a statement of commonly accepted standards – both the document itself, as well as the plethora of guidance that has been produced in relation to it, recommends extensive multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure that the VPs are successfully implemented.

Though implementation of the VPs is, first and foremost, the responsibility of the oil, gas, and mining companies themselves, the participation of “home” and “host” governments, as well as civil society from within the country and abroad, is important in fomenting the conditions that encourage and facilitate effective implementation.

With the government of Ghana announcing in 2014 that it would sign onto the VPs initiative as the first African nation to do so, it is now in the stages developing a VPs National Action Plan. Working with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Democracy, Rights and Labor, The Fund For Peace (FFP) in partnership with the West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP-Ghana), will lead a program which supports these VPs implementation efforts across Ghana.

Throughout this program, FFP and WANEP-Ghana will engage closely with CSOs, companies and the government, to ensure

the project activities are effective and can remain sustainable. Our program aims to act as a pilot which will spur a highly successful and robust implementation of the VPs in Ghana, led through the government’s National Action Plan, as well as ongoing civil society dialogue and constructive company engagement. The implementation of the VPs initiative in Ghana has the potential not only to help address core issues such as human rights, violence, and transparency in extractives affected areas, but also presents a unique opportunity to identify best practices for in-country learning and future implementation by neighboring countries across Africa.

## Our Program Goal

The central program goal is to foster a more permissive and accepting environment for VPs implementation projects in Ghana. To achieve this goal, the project has four main objectives:

1. Establish sustained multi-stakeholder dialogue with respect to security and human rights;
2. Build capacity of local civil society groups;
3. Increase public education and understanding of human rights, security, corruption, gender, and violence issues; and
4. Contribute to the overall learning and development of best practice in creating an inclusive, multi-stakeholder VPs in-country process.

## Project Focus Regions in Ghana



This brief summarizes the key project goals and activities relating to the Voluntary Principles in Ghana undertaken by FFP in local partnership with WANEP-Ghana. The project implementation is focused in the four key regions highlighted in the map above. This program is a U.S. Government funded initiative, provided by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Democracy, Rights and Labor.

For further information on our program, please contact FFP or WANEP-Ghana:

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## Program Activities

Beginning in late 2015, the 18 month program will focus on four key regions in Ghana where mining and/or oil and gas operations are underway: Upper East, Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Western. The program will work closely in partnership with the WANEP-Ghana and its network of civil society stakeholders to deliver the activities to communities within the four regions which are affected by extractives operations. Following the completion of a scoping study and baseline assessment of these areas, the program will:

- Provide local targeted trainings to the four local communities. The trainings will focus on VPs awareness and building the capacity of civil society members to monitor conflict within their communities. Based on a needs assessment of the particular community, training will also involve topics such as peace education and non-violence, grievance mechanisms transparency and governance, and media.
- Facilitate local multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms for community members and CSOs to discuss VPs related conflict drivers, deploy a grievance response mechanism where necessary to resolve issues, and document findings which can be used for further constructive dialogue with companies, government and other civil society stakeholders.
- Facilitate a national multi-stakeholder roundtable to bring together the three pillars of government, civil society and company stakeholders in a working group environment to constructively discuss and resolve VPs related issues.
- Deliver a VPs awareness campaign focusing on educating the general public through online media, in tandem with targeted local communications to the four key regions of the project.

## About Us

### The Fund For Peace



The Fund for Peace (FFP) is an independent, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) non-profit research and educational organization founded over five decades ago, headquartered in Washington D.C. FFP works to prevent conflict and promote sustainable security by building relationships and trust across diverse sectors and by developing innovative technologies and tools.

FFP has worked in over 60 countries with a wide range of partners in all sectors: governments, international organizations, the military, non-governmental organizations, academics, journalists, civil society networks, and the private sector. Our projects include supporting grassroots organizations, developing national dialogues, and taking leadership roles in international initiatives.

FFP was a founding NGO participant of the Voluntary Principles on Security & Human Rights (VPS), after the initiative was originally conceived within FFP's Human Rights & Business Roundtable in the late 1990s. FFP continues to serve as a Board Member of the Voluntary Principles Association and a Steering Committee Member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative. FFP also partners with governments, companies and other NGOs on realizing the goals of the VPS through practical implementation at mining and oil sites and within capitals around the world. FFP has developed and implemented a range of VPs training programs, multi-stakeholder dialogues and workshops for CSOs, companies and government stakeholders in countries such as Cameroon, Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Turkey, Indonesia and Nigeria.

### WANEP-Ghana



Established in 2002 as a non-profit, nonpartisan civil society organization, WANEP-Ghana has a network of over 130 grassroots civil society organizations across the country, and is engaged in a wide range of education, peace and conflict research, gender-based (including women, youth and vulnerable groups) peacebuilding, and human security early warning and response activities.

With United Nations Development Programme support, they enhanced the capacity of the Northern Region Peace Advisory Council (NORPAC), which culminated in founding the National Peace Council (NPC) of Ghana. They have successfully trained over 1200 young people and women, and over 500 local government employees, assembly persons, chiefs and other stakeholders in conflict transformation and effectively intervened in over 45 major conflict situations in Ghana.

At the regional level, WANEP partners with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to implement its regional early warning and response system (ECOWARN). WANEP is also a member of the Peace and Security cluster of the African Union's (AU) Economic, Social and Cultural Council-ECOSOCC representing West Africa.. At international level, WANEP has a Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is the West Africa Regional Representative and Chair of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).