

## 2020 Annual Report – Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

### UNICEF Canada's Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

UNICEF Canada is committed to the Voluntary Principles as part of wider efforts to fulfil Articles 19 and 37 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and protect children from all forms violence, abuse or exploitation, as well as for specific arrangements if children are deprived of their liberty. These efforts are also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children; SDG 5.2 to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls, including sexual and other types of exploitation; and SDG 8.7 to secure the prohibition and elimination of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. These commitments are implemented in line with Principle 8 of the Children's Rights and Business Principles to respect and support child rights in security arrangements.

After one year as an Engaged NGO in 2019, UNICEF Canada became a Participant NGO of the Voluntary Principles Initiative in 2020. We actively participated in monthly NGO pillar meetings, verification presentations, quarterly Canada working group meetings, and annual plenary meetings. We also contributed to initiating and then participating as a panelist on the webinar on security arrangements and vulnerable groups, and providing a peer review to the BHP verification presentation.

In 2020 UNICEF Canada together with UN Global Compact Network Canada produced the first Canada Child Rights and Business Assessment. Of the ten key impacts identified that Canadian businesses can have on children, one of these is security arrangements. The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights was promoted, and examples from eight Canadian mining companies were highlighted.

UNICEF Canada supported several mining companies to implement the Child Rights and Security Checklist and Handbook, which equip companies to integrate children's rights into public and private security arrangements, in line with the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights:

- Agnico Eagle Mines included the Checklist as part of their all-site security management audit and required training on child rights and immediate reporting of potential child rights violations.
- Barrick Gold helped co-develop the Checklist, incorporated it into their external security risk assessments and VPs Standard, and included child rights in training for security personnel.
- IAMGOLD committed to address child rights in their security standard and guidelines, and training for security personnel includes specific provisions for addressing and respecting child rights.
- Kinross Gold included the Checklist in its toolkit for implementation of the VPs and in its training.
- Newmont implemented the Checklist at high-risk sites and audited compliance, as well as trained guards on treatment of minors in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Pan American Silver implemented the Checklist and assessed compliance at all sites, as well as training security personnel and disaggregating grievances by age in their grievance mechanism.
- Sherritt International helped co-develop the Checklist, incorporated it into local security arrangements, and had it externally verified through an independent audit.
- Teranga Gold is implementing child-specific protocols for the use of force, search and seizure, apprehension, detention and transfer to authorities, with a focus on risks to girls and young women.

## UNICEF Canada's Promotion of the Voluntary Principles

UNICEF Canada promoted the Voluntary Principles as part of its presentations at major conventions and to key stakeholders, including the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, the Association of Mineral Exploration, the Mining Security Working Group, the Devonshire Initiative, the Lundin Group of Companies, and the UN Global Compact Network Canada. We also conducted an introductory session to the Voluntary Principles at the CSR Institute of Ryerson University, together with Sherritt International and Agnico-Eagle Mines.

UNICEF Canada recognized and supported the Government of Canada's commitment to the Voluntary Principles as part of our submissions to government consultations on their Responsible Business Conduct strategy and other communications. We worked with two sustainability consultancies to integrate considerations of vulnerable groups into the services they provide their corporate clients on implementation of the Voluntary Principles. We also encouraged our colleagues in Mali, Ghana and Guatemala to consider engagement with and promotion of the Voluntary Principles.

## UNICEF Canada's Lessons and Issues relevant to the Voluntary Principles

Through development and implementation of the Child Rights and Security Checklist and Handbook, UNICEF Canada and partners learnt several lessons that are relevant to the Voluntary Principles:

- Most mining companies partially include child rights in their security policies and codes of conduct through addressing child labour.
- Most mining companies address child rights in their personnel screening and prohibition in employing children, and are open to including child rights in their future risk assessments.
- Most mining companies are open to providing specific guidance on the treatment of children, addressing child rights in training, and communicating their activities in their annual reporting.
- Most mining companies need additional guidance on including children or their representatives in stakeholder engagement activities, reporting potential child rights violations, and urging governments to act.

UNICEF Canada also gained several lessons from the VPI webinar on security arrangements and vulnerable groups. Most participants appeared unaware that both the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises require governments and businesses to pay particular attention to the rights of vulnerable or marginalized groups. As such, the concept of salience can be used to identify which groups face the most serious, widespread, and irreversible impacts of security arrangements. Implementation of initial responses can then be piloted at high-risk sites, using scenario-based communications and training, before being adapted and cascaded to low-risk or more remote sites.