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## Search For Common Ground's Communication on Engagement

### Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 17/04/2019

To: 17/04/2021

### Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive

16/04/2021

To our stakeholders:

*I am pleased to confirm that Search For Common Ground reaffirms its support in the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption. Please see below our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.*

*In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions that Search has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for a non-governmental organisation like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.*

Sincerely,



Shamil Idriss

Chief Executive Officer

## Part II. Description of Actions

Search for Common Ground (Search) is an international organisation working to transform the way the world deals with conflict. Since 1982, we have led programs around the world to help societies move away from adversarial approaches to dealing with differences and towards collaborative solutions.

Search's work is guided and supported by the Common Ground Approach, a methodology for addressing conflicts in a way that moves beyond "win-lose", "us-them" thinking and helps identify practical, collaborative solutions to shared problems. The Common Ground Approach recognises that changes must take place across the following five areas: the perception of the self, the perception of "the other", the perception of the issues, the transformation of the relationship, and the transformation of the process. By applying the Common Ground Approach, Search practically supports the UN Global Compact and its principles by working alongside communities, companies, and public authorities to mitigate conflicts and address root causes of instability.

As such, Search supports the Global Compact mainly through in-country programming and global initiatives. An overview of such activities is provided below.

### **In-Country Programming**

#### **Guinea**

- In 2019, Search focused on programming that would bring together companies and communities in a context further complicated by the arrival of a large number of migrant workers. "Boke Hery: Strengthening Dialogue and Reducing Conflicts between Mining Companies, Authorities and Communities" was a 21-month project implemented in the mining areas of the Boké and Boffa prefectures, located on the coast of Guinea. To ease tensions, develop collaborative conflict resolution methods, and improve mutual understanding of rights and duties related to mining activities, Search conducted community awareness and outreach sessions using community communication tools such as participatory theatre and radio listening sessions. The sessions were an opportunity for key stakeholders to develop skills together, initiate dialogue regarding shared challenges and opportunities related to the mining sector, and experiment with collaborative conflict transformation approaches.
- In 2020, Search launched a new project; "Improving Dialogue and Accountability Mechanisms around Mining-related Conflicts in Siguiri". The project will continue throughout 2021 and into early 2022 with the aim of preventing and managing specific conflicts related to the Société AngloGold Ashanti mining site in Siguiri and improving social cohesion, while strengthening mutual trust, accountability, and collaboration between all stakeholders in Siguiri. As part of this, Search has been

supporting the effective running of a Conflict Prevention & Management Task Force. The establishment of such a Task Force was one of the actions agreed following violence related to the expansion of the Siguri gold mine in 2015, however the effectiveness of this Task Force has so far been below expectations, prompting Search's intervention to support its revitalisation.

### **Madagascar**

- In 2019, Search designed and implemented programs to support the development of positive relationships between communities and the private extractive sector at the local, commune, and province level, including via training a diverse set of stakeholders in conflict transformation, nonviolent communication, and rumour management.
- Another main focus in Madagascar was to build a culture of participation, collaboration, and transparency around the management of natural resources. Thus, we organised town hall meetings and public debates to discuss the issues faced by communities and find shared solutions, for example working together with the Ambatovy mining enterprise and communities to address tensions around mining sites. We also established a network of 25 local radio stations throughout the country and strengthened their capacity to produce quality, credible, and impartial radio programming that promote collaborative solutions to issues affecting communities

### **Sierra Leone**

- Since January 2020, Search has been implementing a project on “Strengthening Transparency and Accountability for Mining Communities in Moyamba and Kono Districts” in Sierra Leone. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to building trust and accountability in the mining sector, which has been a long-lasting challenge in Sierra Leone. The project also aims to strengthen the ability of civil society and community-based organizations, local authorities, and mining companies to collaborate around equitable mining in rural mining chiefdom as well as to improve communities' access to information about mining and environmental and social issues related to the mining sector. This project will run until mid-2021.
- In September 2020, Search organised community meetings in the four chiefdoms to develop Community Action Plans (CAPs) where citizens identified issues related to mining governance and put forward solutions. Follow-up meetings allowed citizens, local authorities, and mining companies to examine the CAPs together to ensure they reflect the needs of the community. To increase popular understanding of mining policies and promote inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, Search is also producing a radio drama series “Bush Wahala”, based in a satirical mining community called “Wunjei Town”.

### **Tanzania**

- In Tanzania, Search has worked with private sector mining partners to create sustainable community strategies that hold companies and community members

accountable to each other. In 2019, Search continued working with Acacia Mining and communities near three mines in Bulyanhulu, Buzwagi and North Mara on the project “Let’s Join Hands for Development”.

- The project aimed to build capacities for improved safety and security and the respect for human rights in and around mining sites, strengthen platforms for dialogue and collaborative problem solving around mining issues, and improve social cohesion, trust, and community resilience in areas around mining sites.

## **Global Initiatives**

### **Leadership role in the Voluntary Principles Initiative**

- The [Voluntary Principles Initiative](#) is a multi-stakeholder initiative very much aligned with the mission of the UN Global Compact and bringing together governments, companies, and NGOs to promote implementation of the [Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#). Search is a founding member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative and, since 2020, serves as the chair of its NGO Pillar and a member of its Steering Committee. Search has participated actively in the Voluntary Principles Initiative member verification review processes and other accountability and expertise sharing initiatives.

### **Sharing lessons learned from NGO-private sector partnership in Tanzania**

- Search published an [extensive report](#) taking stock of progress made under Search’s partnership with Acacia Mining/Barrick Gold in Tanzania’s Mara and Shinyanga regions. The report focuses on the “Let’s Join Hands for Development” programme implemented by Search throughout 2018 and 2019, continuing a partnership with Acacia/Barrick that started in 2011. The report covers the outcomes of the project, draws lessons learned for investing in sustainable corporate practice, and provides recommendations for future and similar investments/initiatives.
- To ensure the findings and recommendations outlined in the report can inform wider efforts, Search organised an interactive learning session with 60 participants on the DME for Peace platform. During the session, Carlotta Fassioti, DM&E Specialist for East Africa at Search, led a discussion on “Building Peace through Sustainable Business Practices: What We’ve Learned”. A [recording of the event is available here](#).

### **Joint NGO & private sector initiatives to inform public and corporate policy**

- In July 2020 in a context of mass demonstrations condemning police brutality and systemic racism in public security institutions, Search played a lead role in coordinating corporate and NGOs members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative to publish a [Joint Statement on Policing and Human Rights](#). The statement draws on members’ experiences in improving the human rights performance of private and public security providers. It also shares best practices which companies can incorporate to improve relations and build trust with communities and citizens.

- In August 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom announced a brief open call for evidence on its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. Following this, Search mobilised partners in the UK Voluntary Principles Initiative Working Group and co-authored a Joint NGO-private sector submission around conflict and business, together with BP, the Centre for Security Sector Governance, International Alert, Shell, and Tullow Oil. The submission contains recommendations on the UK's involvement with Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives and how they can further promote values which align to the Global Compact.
- In partnership with Facebook, Search has been conducting research on how users of the platform who are in closest proximity to violent conflict experience and handle harmful content online. We set out to explore experiences of three understudied groups: 1) direct participants of violence, 2) those who interact socially with direct participants of violence, and 3) active resisters of violence. The study resulted in 68 in-depth interviews with individuals from these backgrounds in seven countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, and Tanzania. The research findings will be published in May 2021 and will provide evidence and recommendations for policy-makers, social media companies, and NGOs to encourage safer digital spaces for platform users living in proximity to violent conflicts.

### Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Search's activities over the last two years have produced substantial outcomes furthering the mission of the Global Compact and its principles. An outline of some of these outcomes is provided below.

- In Guinea, the "Boke Hery" project was able to use diverse outreach and media formats to bring evidence-based dialogue to a wider range of people, improving awareness of rights and responsibilities in relation to mining activities among 97% of community participants and improving capacities for better communication and collaboration with mining companies among 93% of community participants. The project also generated community-led initiatives to foster better relations and social cohesion. The ongoing project in Siguiiri has already contributed to the revitalisation of Conflict Prevention & Management Task Forces.
- In Madagascar, Search work on increasing trust and collaboration among local actors and promoting local development in an expanded target zone along the mine's pipeline strengthened the culture of multi-stakeholder dialogue, collaboration, transparency and participation in the management of resources from the mining sector and good governance. The project's radio soap opera *Miandrandra Maraina* ("In Search of Dawn" in Malagasy) was quickly renewed for a second and third

season, produced participatory talk shows in collaboration with local radio stations, and created listening points and listening groups at the community level which enabled deep discussions on the topics brought up by our media programs.

- In Sierra Leone, the 'Action-Oriented Town Hall Meetings' brought together 320 participants in the four chiefdoms and created a platform for mining companies, communities, and other stakeholders to jointly review and advance on Community Action Plans as collective ways of solving community issues. The project's radio drama series "Bush Wahala" gained huge popularity: by the end of 2020, 20 episodes of the drama were produced and broadcast across 33 partner radio stations, including the two community radio stations in Moyamba and Kono, reaching an estimated 3.7 million people. The drama series has contributed to increased awareness about mining laws, contracting, corporate social responsibility and community needs.
- In Tanzania, there has been a [significant return on investment](#) from Search's partnership with Acacia mining, with a consistent drop in incidents (community grievances lodged, trespassing, and fatalities) across mine sites and a reduced need for security forces. Surveys showed that the program interventions were positively associated with an increase in feelings of social cohesion, safety around the mine site, and trust towards the police and Acacia security.
- By disseminating the outcomes and lessons learned from our work in Tanzania, we have also helped shift private sector perceptions of the effectiveness of collaborative and non-securitised measures thanks to the proven capacity of such measures to reduce security incidents and security costs around mining sites and improve community safety, human rights protection, and satisfaction.