
COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

International Alert

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 12 May 2018

To: 31 December 2021

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

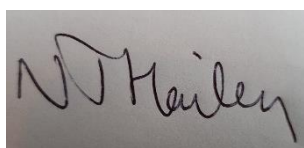
04 January 2022

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that International Alert reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,



Nic Hailey

Executive Director

International Alert

Part II. Description of Actions

International Alert is a peacebuilding organisation with over 30 years' experience supporting communities and advising governments, organisations and companies on how to build peace in situations of complex conflict. This is delivered through five primary methods: dialogue, research, advocacy, capacity building and accompaniment. Alert's strategic focus and technical expertise centres on gender equality, climate change/natural resource management, peaceful economies and conflict sensitivity.

International Alert has contributed to the UN Global Compact's Principles in the following ways:

Human Rights

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

Voluntary Principles Initiative: International Alert has played a leading role in the Voluntary Principles Initiative, a multi-stakeholder initiative aligned with the mission of the UN Global Compact that brings together governments, companies, and NGOs to promote implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR). Our engagement has consisted of participation at the international level, engaging companies to support the implementation of VPSHR and promoting the VPSHR at the national level by leading in-country processes.

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. Alert worked with partners in the UK Voluntary Principles Initiative Working Group to co-author a Joint NGO-private sector submission around conflict and business, together with BP, the Centre for Security Sector Governance, Search for Common Ground, 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.

Extractives Accompaniment: Alert accompanied a long-term strategic partner, Anglo-American, to strengthen their implementation of the VPSHR requirements. Anglo-American is an extractives company with mines in some of the fragile and conflict-affected states where Alert operates. In 2019, Alert completed a comprehensive gap analysis across all South African Business Units and recommended improvements which are being undertaken in the areas of training and awareness raising, integration into corporate risk structures, cross-functional cooperation around security and human rights related issues, involvement of contractors, and grievance mechanisms.

International Alert has also worked with Cerrejón, an important mining company in Colombia, to integrate VPSHR policies into their work practices and in 2018-19 undertook an audit of their practices to assess the improvements made on implementing the VPSHR requirements. Alert identified notable best practices as well as gaps, recommendations and opportunities for improvement.

We have also supported extractives companies in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan to be more sensitive to community needs by establishing direct lines of communication and promoting peaceful resolution of issues. Young community stakeholders have been trained in analysis and advocacy skills so they can engage constructively with extractives in dialogue and decision-making processes. This has reduced violent incidents between the parties and established inclusive consultative practices to ensure that community needs are met and extractive operations are not detrimental to them.

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Verifying human rights-compliant mines: In eastern DRC we are working to improve human rights protections in artisanal mining sites by working with partners L'Observatoire Gouvernance et Paix, The International Peace Information Service and The European Network for Central Africa to resolve conflicts and improve security, social cohesion and human rights. Our project staff visit mining sites to assess their compliance against various criteria and those that meet the required standards of human rights and conflict sensitivity are validated and are regularly monitored for their compliance. Businesses are encouraged to work with validated mines and support their approach. This contributes to cleaner mineral chains by reducing levels of smuggling across the Great Lakes region and providing protections to workers. The project also informs policy recommendations for national and regional governance of mineral chains and engages the private sector on both the supply and demand sides to ensure sufficient levels of due diligence are upheld and companies take proactive steps to improve security in their regions of operation.

Guidance on due diligence in fragile and conflict-affected settings: International Alert published guidance for the International Financial Corporation in 2019 on the key factors in areas of fragility, conflict and violence in IFC's direct investments and Public-Private Partnerships operations. The guidance and accompanying training built on Alert's 2018 report on Human Rights Due Diligence in Conflict-Affected Settings and ensured that investments made by IFC are conflict sensitive and compliant with ethical standards. An external guide on best practices was also developed and shared to relevant audiences.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Projects:

South Africa: Anglo-American partnership

Through a long-term partnership with Anglo-American, Alert supported the understanding and management of broader conflict and human rights related issues and oversaw the implementation of the voluntary principles. In 2019, Alert undertook a study on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation and Harassment in the Mining Sector in South Africa. This report identified areas for improvement by Anglo-American to safeguard employees and the communities. Recommendations to improve practices were suggested and any safeguarding concerns were presented to the Anglo-American board for immediate review. Anglo-American are responding to the findings through a commitment for every Anglo-American operation to create a GBV-elimination plan.

Colombia: Cerrejón partnership

In 2018-19, International Alert undertook an audit of Cerrejón's work to incorporate the VPSHR principles into their work practice. It found that Cerrejón has an advanced level of VPSHR implementation in terms of policies, contractual requirements, and procedures, and the incorporation of contextual considerations into its VPSHR implementation. There was a specific improvement in procedures to ensure policies take into account the cultural sensitivities of local ethnic communities and in general progress was made towards incorporating VPSHR principles.

The report also featured 12 practical recommendations to further improve aspects of the VPSHR implementation, 6 of which are classed as high priority. However, International Alert has not followed up on the status of these recommendations following their submission.

Kyrgyzstan: Promoting consultative extractive practices and peace-oriented local advocacy in southern Kyrgyzstan

This project trained 29 male and 25 female community influencers in peace-oriented advocacy and conflict analysis to analyse local tensions with extractive companies and propose peaceful means for inclusive community interests.

5 dialogue meetings between businesses and local community groups were conducted over a 6-month period consisting of 95 male and 73 female participants.

Research was also conducted on community needs which helped to inform dialogue approaches and the implementation of a small grants programme. These grants have been used to establish communication channels on specific needs such as legislative norms and licensing mechanisms and has resulted in a Round Table – an open meeting for citizens – on topical issues with participation from extractives representatives.

Kenya: Enabling good governance in Kenya's oil sector

This project has conducted 33 capacity building events between October 2018 and September 2021 with 461 male and 290 female participants. These trainings engaged local community groups and businesses on conflict sensitive community engagement and improved the capacity of community facilitators/trainers to be able to cascade their knowledge to their communities.

53 dialogue meetings were conducted over the project lifespan with 616 male and 431 female participants. This included community Round Tables, stakeholder forums and consensus building on oil and gas related grievances as well as engagement between community and business stakeholders.

15 advocacy and outreach activities were conducted including 6 radio talk shows and 6 meetings with the Turkana Chamber of Commerce.

By the end of the project, local communities were able to communicate and resolve their grievances with extractives companies peacefully and find mutually beneficial solutions.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Improving security, social cohesion and human rights in conflict mineral rich regions of Eastern DRC (Madini kwa Amani na mahendeleo)

At the mid-point of this ongoing project, the implementing team have conducted 20 capacity building events with 576 male and 147 female participants. These have served to establish reporting mechanisms in each region of operation and to sensitise stakeholders of the project (members of the reporting structure, political authorities, armed forces and police) on human rights and the mining code that will be monitored in mines through the project.

2 dialogue meetings have been held at mining sites to resolve conflicts between competing parties inclusively and 8 advocacy meetings have been conducted at the sub-national government level with 88 participants including provincial ministers, government security services and a local community group.

This project is ongoing until December 2023 and we expect further outcomes to be reportable after that date.