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# Introducing the Voluntary Principles in Angola

Search for Common Ground in Angola

To the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Intermediary Narrative Report

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# 1. Introduction

In December 2013, Search for Common Ground Angola (SFCG) entered into an agreement with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to implement a project with the overall goal of assessing and preparing the ground for the implementation of the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights (VPs) in the diamond mining areas of the provinces of Lunda Norte (Cuango and Capenda Camulemba municipalities), and Lunda Sul (Cacolo municipality). The VP are a code of conduct for multinational companies in the extractive sector, signed in 2000 by large companies, the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway, as well as NGOs, including SFCG.

The April 24, 2002 cease-fire agreement brought an end to 27 years of bloody civil in Angola. After decades of war, the 2002 peace agreement has allowed Angola to embark on a path towards re-establishing security in the country and promoting economic expansion. Natural resources have contributed to an economic boom in Angola. The paradox is that the economic growth does not reflect the living conditions of people in Angola, where the majority of the population lives below the poverty line. In particular in mining regions, development has not met local people's expectations and violence remains commonplace. There are widespread abuses by private and state security forces in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul.

This report provides the results of SFCG's project on Introducing VPs, sponsored by funding from the British Embassy in Angola. The aim of this project was to assess current knowledge of the VPs in mining areas of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces, as well as prepare the ground for the VPs implementation. Working with an array of public and private stakeholders, our intervention was designed to achieve three expected results:

1. Reliable information on the current state of the awareness and implementation of the VP in the target-areas is available.
2. Challenges to the implementation of the VP in the target-areas are identified, as perceived by the security forces, mining companies, government authorities, and the local community.
3. A training methodology on the implementation of the VP is developed and field tested in the target-areas, relying on context-specific experience and highlighting SFCG's common ground approach.

The report mainly focuses on the presentation of the findings of SFCG's research in Angola's mining areas. These findings will allow SFCG to design the next phase for introducing VPs, in collaboration with the British Embassy, the Angolan Government, and other stakeholders. During the fieldwork we have been able to gather opinions from ordinary people, government officials, artisanal diamonds diggers, security officers, and members of mining companies in the project region. To collect data we used questionnaires, interviews, informal conversations, field visits, and observations.

Two main findings stand out from our research: firstly, there are **alarming triangulation conflicts between** the diamond company (INDIAMA), local community, and security officers – both private and public ones. Secondly, there is **lack of awareness of the VPs** by different actors in target-regions. Therefore, SFCG is in the process of preparing the next phase of this project, which will aim to raise awareness about the VPs among all stakeholders, increase their willingness to support future implementation of the Principles, provide them with conflict resolution tools, as well as create forums for sharing best practices on VPs.

## 2. Project Context

Since the end of its civil war, in 2002, Angola has embarked on a path towards re-establishing security in the country and promoting economic expansion. Natural resources are driving Angolan economic growth. Yet, in mining areas, development has not met residents' expectations and violence remains commonplace. Abuses by private and state security forces in diamond-rich Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul persist. The legacy of successive colonial and wartime regimes have favoured an adversarial relationship between the state and its people, discouraging accountability or responsiveness to grievances. Moreover, there are few forums for civil society or human rights groups to seek changes.

Starting in 2000, the Principles have offered such a framework for civil society, government, and companies to act on issues of mutual interest to improve security for everyone. SFCG is a member of the NGO pillar at a global level, and the United Kingdom is one of the leading members of the Government pillar globally, and has played a key role in proposing the Principles as a possible framework for improving security and human rights in Angola. Nonetheless, **the issues related to the Principles are still considered as a taboo in the country.**

Despite the efforts that have been made by the Human Rights Department of Angola's Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, knowledge of the VPSHR, as well as their implementation, are still weak, impacting negatively on the safety and well-being of populations in mining areas. In those areas, there is a general feeling of mistrust among the population, which increases when **companies rely on security forces over which they have limited control**, and who are sometimes characterized by low level of professionalism, the use of excessive force and poor knowledge and respect for human rights.

For the abovementioned reasons, sources of conflict abound in mining areas, which might make it hard for the concerned actors to identify common interests and potential for collective action. For instance, in Angola, community leaders in areas surrounding extractive mining sites and the companies operating them share a mutual interest in achieving economic development, as well as maintaining a peaceful coexistence. However, **lack of communication channels among stakeholders prevents them from understanding and acting on those shared interests.** Hence, SFCG, with the FCO support, is implementing this project in order to prepare the ground for the introduction of the VPSHR in Angola, as **we see the Principles as providing a framework for mutual understanding among all parts.**

## 3. Project Implementation

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This section provides information on how the project was implemented. The project has begun with a series of initial strategic meetings where SFCG met separately with different stakeholders in order to collect their inputs concerning the elaboration of a baseline mapping methodology. The original idea was to convene a single meeting, reuniting representatives of all parts concerned by the Principles. However, given the sensitivity of the subject in mining areas, we concluded that such a meeting was not feasible without preparing the field. Moreover, as mistrust prevails among most stakeholders, we realized that previous confidence-building work would be required; otherwise the participants could feel threatened and uncomfortable to share their perceptions and ideas.

### 3.1. Research and Baseline Study

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As part of the research methodology of this project, SFCG conducted individual meetings with stakeholders and a baseline assessment. The Terms of Reference (TORs) developed gave directions regarding the goal and objectives of the baseline assessment, geographic targets and delimitations, data collection methodology and tools, data analysis and quality assurance, gender considerations, key deliverables and timeline, and dissemination of the report's findings. In accordance with the project overall goal and objectives, the baseline study was conducted in order to map the level of knowledge of the VP by all kinds of stakeholders operating in the mining regions, such as national and private security forces, local authorities, companies, civil society organisations, and human rights groups.

The methodology for data collection was designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative information. Our research included survey information collected from one hundred and fifty (150) ordinary citizens, fifteen (15) informal conversations, some observations, and fifteen (15) semi-structured interviews with key informants from civil society organizations, police forces, security forces, and mining employees. The baseline study, from the methodological design to data insertion, was carried out from March to April 2014 in three municipalities of the province of Lunda Norte (Cuango and Capenda Camulemba Municipalities) and Lunda Sul (Cacolo Municipality).

The collection and analysis of data was done by Simão André (Monitoring and Evaluation Project Coordinator), the data were entered and analysed using an Excel database. The main constraints encountered during the implementation of the study was excessive interruption of the survey process by the police, supervision and local authorities; difficult access to stakeholders who could be interviewed; and the lack of knowledge of the population regarding the basic questions contained on the form; as well as the fear of joining or answering the questions.

**Key findings** of the assessment include:

- **98%** of the respondents do not know and never heard about the VPs, especially among citizens and mining workers. From the 2% of respondents who knew about the VPs, the majority occupies the highest managerial positions in mining companies.
- **80%** of men and **85%** of women strongly agree that their rights are been violated.
- Concerning the perception about conflict, **66%** of respondents agree that the existence of land issues conflict is a reality.
- **79%** of the respondents confirmed the need of capacity building on human rights and the VPSHR for security forces and mining workers.
- **80%** and **90%** of women and men, respectively, strongly agree that there is a need of conflict resolution training to build up their skills in solving the problems on their communities.
- Informal consultations showed that lack of communication among the companies and the population creates tensions. For instance, a local authority that asked not to be identified, told us that INDIAMA built a school in the municipality. Nonetheless, what the population needed the most was a hospital, as there are deaths that could be easily avoided if medical assistance was available, such as deaths resulting from complications during birth. Currently, pregnant women in labor need to go to neighboring cities when there are complications, and most of them die on the road.
- Another complaint we captured in our informal interviews regards the lack of option of undergraduate programs in target-areas. In one municipality, youth complained that the only course available at university level is pedagogy.

In line with these findings, the baseline assessment report presented the following recommendations for the next phase of introducing VPs in Angola:

- Project activities should take into consideration the use of force and violence that is a common reality in target-areas.
- As the study shows, conflict resolution trainings are very much needed and would be welcomed by the majority of the population. Hence, we recommend donors to fund follow-up projects, aiming at using the training material that is being developed under the current one, and promoting dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders.



Picture 1: Consultation meeting with local authorities and security forces in Lunda Norte.

### **3.2. Development of an Interactive Training Module for Public Security Officers**

Using the inputs collected in the initial strategy meetings and in the baseline study, as well as Search for Common Ground's previous experience in promoting the VPSHR in other African countries, we have developed a training module for Public Security Officers. Moreover, in our field research, we noticed that addressing only security forces would not be sufficient to foster the implementation of the Principles in the Lunda provinces. As lack of knowledge of the Principles and mistrust is widespread among all sectors operating and people living in the mining areas, we decided to include training modules focusing on civil society organizations, mining companies, and local authorities, in addition to the manual focused on security forces. The first version of the module is being finalized and printed. We have also developed a guideline manual for mining companies.

### **3.3. Develop and Print Comic Books**

Comic books will accompany the aforementioned training material, as a way of making its content more accessible to people with all educational backgrounds. In June 2014, we held a writer's development workshop, where we identified key themes and messages. We have also hired an Angolan artist, who is currently developing the graphic design of the comic book. Generally speaking, the plot will show actual and potential local tensions between the population, mining companies, and security forces. The story will end with all sectors being able to find a collaborative solution, showing that dialogue is the best way to reach peaceful solutions.



The underlying message of the comic book will follow SFCG's common ground approach, focused on understanding differences, and acting on commonalities.

## 4. Project Outputs

Planned Outputs	Accomplished so far
Baseline study	Finalized
Training module is developed, printed in 2000 copies	Training module has been developed and will be tested in the next phase
Comic book is produced, printed in 5000 copies, and successfully pilot-tested.	Comic book is currently being developed by an Angolan graphic designer.
Final evaluation	Has not started yet.

## 5. Challenges and Management Notes

This project experienced delays of implementation due to internal and external problems to SFCG. The internal challenge was the change of SFCG's Country Director, which contributed to the delay in this project implementation. However, as following explained, the major delay was due to external factors.

In Angola, the implementation of the baseline study, particularly the organization of key informant interviews and the strategic meetings, proved a challenging task in the context of Lunda, where even the smallest group meeting can be an interpretation of a political activity or a subversive opposition work. Therefore, completion of the baseline study can be considered to be an achievement at this stage of the project. Moreover, the negotiation process with police forces, security forces, and mining employees was not an easy process due to bureaucratic administrative management processes and the sensibility of the region, but we were patient and persistent so we were able to overcome those challenges.

In addition, despite our efforts to establish contact with the Angolan government in order to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) including a capacity building plan for further work and development, we have not yet been able to do so. We continue working for this goal and, in this respect, we are very optimistic with the opportunity of fostering dialogue and collaboration with key stakeholders at the Workshop on the VPSHR, that will take place the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014, organized by the Kimberly Process Bureau at the Ministry for Geology and Mines, in partnership with the British Embassy in Angola.

## 6. Final Stage of this project

The next quarter, 1 October - 31 December 2014, will see the implementation of the following project activities:



- Presentation of the training module to stakeholders during the workshop on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014.
- Field-test of the training module by a consultant hired by SFCG.
- Final version of the training module, incorporating feedback from the two previous activities is printed in 2000 copies.
- Field-test of comic book.
- Printing of 5000 copies of final version of the comic book.
- Final evaluation done by an external evaluator.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The project for introducing VPs is crucial for the current situation of Angola and most importantly the diamond-rich region of the country. Even though Angola's Government is not yet one of the country-members of the VP, it has been accommodating Voluntary Principles debates that is well-aligned with their policy objectives of protecting human rights, promoting development, and avoiding or reducing conflict. As mentioned earlier, there are widespread conflicts between different actors in the provinces of Lunda Norte and Sul. Moreover, there is lack of awareness of the VPs by different actors in our project target regions. Therefore, SFCG found opportune to propose the new phase of this project that will focus on awareness raising about the VPs; providing stakeholders with conflict resolution tools; as well as creating a forum for sharing best practices on VPs.

The major problem observed during the implementation of our project and that required rapid and strategic intervention is the fact that key-actors (diamond companies, police and local population) are not currently working to foster the implementation of the VPs, due to lack of awareness and widespread mistrust among concerned actors. Hence, in order to prepare the ground for the implementation of the Principles, activities should tackle issues of building trust and collaborative dialogue. SFCG intends to work on building confidence among actors, while showing them how the implementation of the VPs can bring benefits to all sides, ensuring a prosperous and peaceful future in mining areas in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul.

Moreover, as INDIAMA, the biggest mining company working in the area, is not yet part of the VPs, we recommend creating a forum for best-practices exchange with foreign companies that operate in Angola and adhere to the Principles, such as Chevron, British Petroleum, and Total. Such a forum would be a good occasion to show INDIAMA the benefits they can get from promoting and respecting the VPs. Moreover, if INDIAMA does so, it will serve as a model for the so-called "bosses" (individuals who are granted the right to explore diamonds). Currently, none of the bosses are part of the VPs and most of them do not know about the Principles.

We conclude that there is still a long way to go before the Principles can be effectively implemented in Angola. Hence, we recommend donors to fund follow-on projects with this goal.

## **8. Annexes**

Annex 1: Baseline Study Report

Annex 2: Questionnaire for survey conducted with the population on target-regions.

Annex 3: Interview guide