

## **VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES FRAMEWORK FOR ADMISSION OF NEW NGOS**

The criteria below outline the expectations for new applicants and existing NGO participants of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

Criteria 1-2 establish the expectations of participants in terms of commitment to the VPs and its underlying values, and an applicant/participant's ability to contribute to the process.<sup>1</sup> Independence is considered a prerequisite for fulfilling the role of NGOs in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. Criteria 3 is intended to ensure that the NGO participants in the VPs are able to demonstrate independence from other participants.

### **1. Admission Process**

- 1.1 Any NGO may formally request admission to the Voluntary Principles (hereinafter referred to as "applicant NGO").
- 1.2 The request is made in writing at any time to the Secretariat and is to include a statement of the Applicant NGO's commitment to the Voluntary Principles and describe the activities they undertake or plan to undertake relevant to the Voluntary Principles.
- 1.3 Proposals regarding entry of new applicant NGOs will be put before the Steering Committee for consideration.
- 1.4 An applicant NGO will be welcomed to join the VPs if there is consensus among the participants, as represented by the Steering Committee, that the organization meets the entry criteria underneath. If consensus cannot be reached, then the matter will be resolved through an open vote by at least 75% of the members of each pillar (government, NGO, and company). The approval or rejection of the application is communicated to the Secretariat through the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat will advise the applicant of the decision.
- 1.5 If an application has been rejected, the applicant NGO has the right to appeal. The application request will be reconsidered and the process will be repeated following subsequent dialogue between the Steering Committee and the applicant NGO, taking into consideration arguments brought forward by the applicant NGO.

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<sup>1</sup> These criteria do not concern participation in in-country VPs Processes.

## **2. Entry Criteria**

- 2.1 The organization should have an established record and reputation for the promotion of respect for human rights and/or promotion of human security/peace.
- 2.2 Formal commitment to sustained and public promotion of the VPs and agreement to the VP's Participation Criteria.
- 2.3 Willing and capable to contribute to the international VPs process; if based in host country, willing and capable to contribute to national in-country process.
- 2.4 The NGO must be independent and should not be compromised, in its ability to defend the rights and interests of victims of violence and human rights violations and to contribute to holding accountable corporate and state VPs participants because of financial or other relationships with VPs participants or otherwise. The structure and governing rules of the organization should guarantee the not-for-profit nature of the NGO and its ability to act independently

## **3. Participating NGOs**

- 3.1 Participating NGOs are inter alia:
  - a. Eligible to participate fully in all aspects of the Voluntary Principles, including governance and other decision-making forums, and required to comply with the Participation Criteria;
  - b. Required to recuse themselves from any voting in regards to a fellow participant that they have a financial or material relationship with that is relevant to the Voluntary Principles.
  - c. Required to disclose all sources and amounts of income, with details on the purpose of funds for those from other participants in the Voluntary Principles.