

Four major announcements and Calls for Action have been made in London on the eve of the 1st anniversary of the disaster

The Mining and Tailings Safety Initiative, a group that has over US \$14 trillion in assets under management and is co-led by the Church of England Pensions Board and the Council of Ethics of the Swedish National Pension Funds today announced the following:

1. Launched the first ever global public database of over 1,900 tailings dams: [tailing.grida.no](https://tailing.grida.no)
2. Announced [a joint shareholder delegation](#) to Minas Gerais to visit communities affected by tailings disasters of Mariana and Brumadinho to be led by the Bishop of Birmingham, Chair of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum and including the Church of England Pensions Board, the Council on Ethics for the Swedish National Pension Funds and the UN backed Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)
3. A set of Investor principles for mining companies and principles for how investors finance the mining sector
4. Issued a call to companies and governments to jointly set up a global tailings alert/monitoring system similar to those in aviation and shipping. To establish an urgent process of identifying and then removing the most dangerous tailings dams.

These announcements were made at a summit chaired by Bishop David Urquhart (Bishop of Birmingham and Convenor of the Lords Spiritual), held at Church House Westminster on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020, on the eve of the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Brumadinho disaster in Brazil that killed 270 people. The announcements follow major interventions by investors since the disaster, that included the demand for a new independent global standard of tailings management and disclosure from 700 mining companies regarding tailings dams.

The rapid growth of the Investor Mining and Tailings Safety Initiative participation over the last 12 months demonstrates the level of seriousness with which investors have approached tailings dam safety. The Initiative is now supported by over 110 institutions with more than US \$14 trillion assets under management.

Following a Remembrance Service the opening plenary of the Summit was addressed by Ms Angelica Amanda Andrade whose sister was killed in the Brumadinho disaster.

### **Global Tailings Portal Launched**

The Summit saw the launch of the first publicly accessible global database on tailings storage facilities, which was presented by Professor Elaine Baker of the University of Sydney and GRID-Arendal.

This portal presents the disclosures that mining companies have made in response to the request made by the Global Mining and Tailings Safety

Initiative. [<https://www.churchofengland.org/investor-mining-tailings-safety-initiative>]

Professor Baker presented data on the following:

- 1,939 Tailings Facilities are included in the database, disclosed by 98 mining companies.
- These 98 companies represent approximately 54% of the global mining industry by market capitalisation.
- The total current volume of tailings stored in disclosed facilities is 45.7 billion cubic metres, which is the equivalent to the volume of 11,447 Wembley Stadiums.
- In 5 years time, the total expected volume disclosed by mining companies is over 56.6 billion cubic metres of tailings.
- This represents a 25% increase, which is equivalent to the volume of 2,728 Wembley Stadiums.

PLEASE NOTE; Wembley Stadium by volume is = 4,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> within the whole stadium with the roof closed. This data is only an insight into 97 listed mining companies that have currently responded to investors requests and will be further enhanced with additional disclosures.

### **The Joint Shareholder Delegation to Minas Gerais**

An announcement was made that a high level delegation comprising the the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum, the Church of England Pensions Board, the Council of Ethics for the Swedish Public Pension Funds and the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) will visit communities impacted by the disaster in both Brumadinho and Mariana to assess how communities concerns have been addressed.

### **Investor Expectations on Tailings Storage Facilities**

Investors also adopted a set of principles for mining companies as well as principles to guide how investors engage with and finance the sector. These principles will be presented to PRI and all members asked to support them.

### **Call for Global Tailings Alert System and Mechanism to Remove Dangerous Dams**

The Initiative also identified a number of further interventions that need to be made and invited companies and governments to work together to urgently implement them. The first was to establish a global alert system similar to that operated for aviation and shipping. This should be

independent and operate 24/7 and alert local and national governments, regulators and companies when monitoring reveals concerns. A further call was made to urgently identify the most dangerous dams and establish a mechanism so that they can be removed. Investors committed to work together to further develop these interventions.

**Adam Matthews, Director for Ethics & Engagement for the Church of England Pensions Board and Co-Chair of the Global Mining &**

**Tailings Safety Initiative said:** ‘On the eve of the Brumadinho disaster we remember those lives lost and families and communities impacted by this tragedy. Communities need to know they are safe and all that can be done is being done to prevent future disasters from happening. We have established a global database but today we call for the creation of a global 24/7 independent alert system for all tailings dams. Investors will now engage with industry to see this is created and we will reinforce this through our expectations of the sector. Much more needs to still be done and removal of the most dangerous dams has to also be the immediate priority. We must ensure that the voices of those communities impacted by this disaster continue to inform our response’

**John Howchin, Secretary General of the Council of Ethics for the Swedish Public Pension Funds and Co-Chair of the Global Mining and**

**Tailings Safety Initiative said:** ‘One year on from this disaster, that should never have happened, we release the first global tailings database tracking 1,900 of the world’s tailings dams. This is a fraction of the dams that exist but it is a start and establishes what we expect from any company seeking finance from investors. We are continuing to engage with companies that have not disclosed and will use votes and company AGMs to ensure this request is responded to. Not reporting is unacceptable and poses a risk to our pension funds.’

**Bishop David Urquhart, the Bishop of Birmingham said:** ‘We have heard emotional and powerful testimonies from communities that call us to act and take responsibility. The images of the 270 lives that have been taken in this disaster lined the wall of Church House in London today at the same time that communities come together in Brazil on the eve of the disaster. We are all intimately connected to mining in society and the resources we demand for modern life but our demand for resources cannot be at the expense of people’s lives and an environment destroyed. This is the moment that investors together with companies ensure tailings dams are properly addressed and we will ensure that the voice of communities guides our work.’

**Ms Angelica Amanada Andrada, a representative of the community whose sister was killed** in the disaster and addressed the Summit in London said: ‘Tailings dams are an issue that has to be dealt with immediately and efficiently. We can no longer allow disasters like Brumadinho to happen again. It is unacceptable that death and mass destruction have been happening due to the irresponsibility, negligence and deception of mining companies. Life is the most precious gem there is, and it has to be protected above everything.

**Ms Fiona Reynolds, CEO, Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI),** said ‘Today’s Summit paid tribute to those who had lost their lives and the continued suffering of the community. It was also a powerful example of successful collaborative engagement that is focused on bringing about lasting and meaningful global change to ensure that the investment community is doing everything it can to ensure we do not see a repeat of the tragedy at Brumadinho. When investors, corporations, governments, academics and civil society come together with a clear and focused agenda they can bring about positive change. When it comes to human and environmental tragedy, we can’t turn a blind eye, we can’t abdicate



**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/investor-action-tailings-dam-safety-one-year-after-brumadinho>