

Communities warn of continued risk of similar disasters that killed 270.

**London, Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.** On the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Brumadinho tailings dam disaster, the Church of England Pensions Board, together with the Council of Ethics of the Swedish National Pension Funds leading a collaboration of investors with over USD \$20 trillion in assets under management, committed to further interventions to drive change in the mining sector on tailings dams as well as more broadly, including developing a 2030 Investor Agenda for a reformed mining sector.

Investors, community representatives from Brumadinho, companies and leading experts held an online event to review the progress made over the past two years to address the risk of future tailings dam disasters. During the event the Bishop of Birmingham, Rt Revd David Urquhart, the Convenor of the Lord's Spiritual (convenor of the bishops in the UK House of Lords), led an act of remembrance for all those impacted by the disaster.

**The event noted that considerable progress had been made over the past two years including:**

- Co-convening with the International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) an independent process to develop a new Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management released in August 2020;
- The first comprehensive corporate disclosures from listed mining companies on their management of tailings dams. 65% of the mining industry by market capitalisation responded to our disclosure request, including 45 of the largest 50 listed mining companies in the world;
- The first global database/portal of listed company disclosures, which now presents data on 1853 tailings facilities, owned by 105 mining companies;
- A commitment by the Church of England Pensions Board, Swedish Council of Ethics and the UNEP to establish an independent International Institute on Tailings to advance the Global Standard and future disclosure.

**Despite the progress investors noted that much more was still to be done. The Co-Chairs of the Mining and Tailings Safety Initiative, Adam Matthews and John Howchin, outlined the following further steps to be taken:**

- **Launch of an independent Global Institute** by the end of 2021, dependent on the feasibility and scoping work commissioned by UNEP, the Church of England Pensions Board and the Swedish Council on Ethics.
- **Expectation of companies to confirm that they will adopt the Global Industry Standard** and disclose a timeline for their intended compliance. Investors committed to engage with companies and a list of those adopting and those not adopting the Standard will be made available ahead of company AGMs to inform investor voting decisions on Directors and Chairs.
- **Creation of an independent Expert Advisory Group to determine a second disclosure request** to be made in 2021 (following the first made in 2019). The second request will align to the new Standard and be informed by analysis of the first disclosure. The Expert Group would be co-chaired by Professor Elaine Baker of the University of Sydney and Dr Stephen Barrie of Church of England Pensions Board.

- **Creation of an Expert Working Group to determine the feasibility of global 24/7 tailings monitoring hub.** This group will report by the end of Q2 and comprise industry as well as academic and community representatives.
- **Creation of an Investor Working Group on Affected Communities** to work with communities following both the Brumadinho and Mariana disasters.
- **Developing a 2030 Investor Agenda for the Mining Sector.** Drawing upon the lessons from the tailings engagement, the Church of England Pensions Board together with the Council on Ethics of the Swedish National Pensions Funds, will convene a high-level meeting of asset owners and key fund managers (to be informed by stakeholders and industry) to develop a 2030 Investor Agenda for the mining sector. This agenda will address systemic issues including tailings waste, climate change, a just transition related to automation, supply chains, child labour, critical mineral supply, pipeline of future mining leaders, amongst other issues. It will also consider how investors can consolidate disclosure requests and independent site level monitoring as well as drive systemic change to support best practice as a minimum standard.

**Commenting Adam Matthews, Co-Chair of the Mining & Tailings Safety Initiative and Director of Ethics & Engagement for the Church of England Pensions Board, said:**

“Society demands the products of mining but is often far removed from the reality when it is done badly or goes wrong. Good practice exists in mining and the new Global Industry Standard on Tailings is the start of driving the sector-wide change needed on this specific issue. Whilst significant progress has been made, there remains a pressing need for investors to continue to work with industry on tailings and several other issues that challenge the sectors social licence to operate. Ultimately we want this sector to flourish and on this second anniversary of the Brumadinho disaster, we are committing to not only address the issue of tailings waste and storage but ensure this disaster is the catalyst for a reformed mining sector on a range of systemic issues.”

**Commenting John Howchin, Co-Chair of the Mining & Tailings Safety Initiative and Secretary General of the Council on Ethics of the Swedish National Pension Funds, said:**

“We have demonstrated how investors can drive genuine change in a sector that is vital to society and the low-carbon transition. There is a partnership to be developed with asset owners that establishes an agenda of change that will ensure this sector is not undermined by repeated incidents. We repeatedly acknowledge the good practice that exists and the efforts of many in the sector to the highest standards however, each incident undermines societies’ as well as investors’ confidence. It is incumbent on us as long-term institutional investors to both be at the table and outline an agenda for change that addresses the many systemic issues that continually undermine it.”

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