



## Oral Statement at the UNCSocD57

### VIVAT International

#### Importance of Social Protection Systems in mining related environmental disasters

Delivered by: Robertus Mirsel

VIVAT International expresses its deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of the ore waste dam breaking in Brumadinho, in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil, on 26 January 2019, causing deaths of at least 90 people and 292, missing. This occurred only three years after a similar disaster in Mariana. It also causes insecurity in the people as there are several other dams in the region. While the environmental impact is not clear, it is estimated that 14 million cubic meters of waste were cleared in the Paraopeba, one of the main tributaries of Sao Francisco River.

This tragedy is one of many disasters around the world, that highlights the need for strong frameworks for policy and practice in order to protect the lives of people; and to make it imperative for the Mining Corporations to take all necessary steps for environmental protection.

A clear policy that would enable the States make Mining Corporations liable to maintain high levels of environmental risk-management could help in preventing and dealing with disasters. Many countries have policies for compensation payment. Such policies should consider the impact on social protection policies by addressing loss of employment and livelihood options, income and related access to social protection and social services in the occurrence of disasters. Environmental bonds can be more effective at securing environmental compensation than post-disaster penalties.

We, therefore, urge the Member States:

- To bring environmental and mining disasters in mining companies to prioritize human safety and environmental protection by using the *Standard for Responsible Mining* to improve their practices.
- To provide social assistance policies to help the most vulnerable individuals, households and communities affected by natural disasters, including of this kind, to meet a social floor and improve living standards.

Finally, we support a *Binding Treaty for Business and Human Rights*, at the international level, and a responsible, effective and prompt judicial response for those who bet on impunity.

Thank you.