

## Barrick Pueblo Viejo's Response to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights' Statement

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (May 22, 2025)** – Pueblo Viejo has taken note of the press conference and statement issued earlier today by Dr. Marcos Orellana, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxic Substances and Human Rights, following his visit to the Dominican Republic.

It is unfortunate that Dr. Orellana did not take up our invitation to visit the Pueblo Viejo mine during his time in the country. We believe that any objective assessment of our operation would benefit from direct, first-hand observation. Our invitation remains open, and we continue to believe that such a visit is important to ensuring balance and accuracy in any evaluation of our activities.

We met with Dr. Orellana on 20 May 2025 and had a constructive exchange on a range of topics, including our shared commitment on respect for human rights. We outlined how this commitment is embedded in Barrick's Human Rights Policy, which is informed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. We also shared information on our broader sustainability vision, including our approach to environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

Dr. Orellana's statement acknowledges certain facts—including the independent verification of our operation's environmental compliance and the speculative influx of non-residents into the Naranjo Valley. We are nevertheless issuing this note to clarify other key issues raised during the press conference and to address certain public misconceptions to reassure communities and other stakeholders that Pueblo Viejo's operations reflect a firm commitment to sustainable mining.

### Water Management

The suggestion that the communities that live downstream of the El Llagal tailings dam live in fear that the structure could collapse is a gross generalisation. Pueblo Viejo has worked hard to build and maintain a strong and transparent relationship with our host communities. While we recognise that a small number of individuals actively advocate against mining, their views do not reflect the experience or sentiment of the broader community.

Water management at Pueblo Viejo reflects both our legal obligations under Dominican environmental permits and our adherence to international best practices in the design, operation, and monitoring of tailings and water infrastructure.

We maintain an extensive water monitoring network comprising more than 150 surface and groundwater stations located at representative points throughout our operations and the surrounding environment. This network was developed by independent hydrology experts and is monitored more frequently than required by local regulations. The data it generates helps verify the effectiveness of our environmental safeguards and allows us to respond proactively to any potential issue.

All water samples are analysed in certified independent laboratories under ISO/IEC 17025—the most well recognised international standard for environmental laboratories—ensuring the traceability and reliability of results. These results are reported semi-annually to the Ministry of Environment as part of our environmental compliance obligations and are further validated against external standards, including those of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), of which Barrick is a member.

In addition to our internal monitoring, we have carried out a participatory water monitoring program with our host communities since 2012. This initiative has included more than 50 monitoring events involving over 2,000 community members and 580 representatives from universities, NGOs, and the press. At these events, participants collect samples at agreed locations, and the results are shared directly with them and made public. The latest results, from March 2025, again confirmed our compliance with all relevant environmental regulations.

## **El Naranjo Tailings Storage Facility (TSF)**

The El Naranjo Tailings Storage Facility is a critical infrastructure project for the operational continuity of Pueblo Viejo. It is designed to support the mine's continued operation beyond 2040, thereby helping to sustain current levels of direct and indirect employment in the region, ensuring the Pueblo Viejo mine continues to deliver benefits to the Dominican Republic and its people.

The site for the facility was selected following a comprehensive evaluation process that sought to minimise environmental and social impacts. Specifically, the selected location—selected in consultation with the Dominican state—avoids protected areas, steers clear of national infrastructure, and reduces the number of families potentially affected. Further details regarding the site selection process are available [here](#).

A full Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was conducted over 28 months by a multidisciplinary team of independent international and local experts. The ESIA followed international best practice and involved multiple opportunities for consultation with government authorities and other stakeholders. The study was reviewed and approved by the relevant regulatory authorities in accordance with Dominican laws and published in 2022 (available [here](#)).

Our facilities in the Dominican Republic are designed to GISTM extreme loading criteria and are regularly reviewed by an Independent Tailings Review Board (ITRB) to ensure the facilities are robust and meet current best practice. In addition, prior to construction or whenever we must make a change, the design is reviewed and approved by INDHRI (the Dominican authority responsible for controlling and regulating the use of surface and underground water resources), who in turn have their own independent Board of Consultants that provide guidance to ensure dam safety. The most recent ITRB reviews took place in April 2025 (for El Llagal) and in March 2024 (for El Naranjo). Another review of El Naranjo is planned for October 2025.

We are aware of the report authored by Steven Emerman, which was referenced by Dr. Orellana in his remarks. This report—sponsored by anti-mining organisations outside of the Dominican Republic—has already been publicly addressed by Barrick in detail. Among other things, our response pointed out significant methodological flaws and misrepresentations in Mr. Emerman's analysis, including his assumptions regarding dam failure scenarios and his misunderstanding of the tailings storage facility's engineering and regulatory context. Our full response is available [here](#). It is disappointing Dr. Orellana referred to Mr Emermen's report as opposed to reviewing the publicly available ESIA information for himself.

The design, construction, and operation of the El Naranjo facility will adhere to the Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management (GISTM), as is the case with the existing Llagal facility. To be clear, the Naranjo facility is not one of the largest such facilities and is not disproportionately larger than other large gold tailings facilities.

We remain committed to transparency and continuous engagement with stakeholders throughout the life of the facility and will provide a GISTM disclosure regarding the Naranjo TSF later in 2025, along with the annual disclosure regarding the [El Llagal](#) TSF. For completeness, our [Tailings Management Policy](#) and [Tailings Management Standard](#) are public documents available for review.

## Resettlement Process

Dr Orellana refers to the ‘unfinished resettlement’ of three communities of La Laguna, La Cerca, La Piñita downstream of the dam. To be clear, there is no resettlement program for these communities, nor are such communities downstream of either the proposed El Naranjo TSF or the existing El Lagal TSF.

The resettlement program that is underway is associated with the development of the El Naranjo TSF and has been designed in alignment with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standard 5 on Involuntary Resettlement (IFC PS5). It is built on a foundation of continuous stakeholder engagement carried out over the course of several years.

This extensive engagement has resulted in broad consensus on the overall resettlement framework, including the development of the host site, the construction of new housing, livelihood restoration programs, and community development initiatives. Nonetheless, a limited number of concerns remain unresolved. These relate primarily to specific crop valuations and questions of eligibility for compensation.

To address these issues, Barrick has been participating in a structured mediation process alongside certain community representatives, the Office of the Public Defender, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and the Catholic Church. As Dr. Orellana rightly noted, this process has already resulted in narrowing of differences.

We are confident that the compensation rates being offered, which were calculated by expert consultants with broad experience of similar resettlement programs, are consistent with IFC PS5. In this respect, we believe it is inappropriate for Dr. Orellana to suggest that compensation should be adjusted simply because of higher gold prices. Compensation under IFC PS 5 is based on the *replacement value* of land and assets—not the expected profitability of the project or volatile commodity prices. It is inappropriate more generally for Dr. Orellana to offer an opinion on the adequacy of compensation rates in circumstances where he has had no meaningful opportunity to review the underlying assessments or methodologies that inform them. That said, Pueblo Viejo has already made meaningful concessions in the interest of achieving fair, negotiated outcomes and will continue to engage in good faith with all stakeholders to resolve remaining concerns.

Relatedly, Dr. Orellana’s account of the blockages of roads by certain members of the communities does not reflect the full picture. Illegal blockages instituted by a small group of individuals persisted for months. After repeated requests to remove the blockades were ignored, the Government directed law enforcement officers to restore public access. During this operation, some of the same individuals escalated their actions, again blocking roads, threatening Pueblo Viejo contractors performing technical studies, and confronting law enforcement. As we made clear in our public statement at the time, the officers acted to protect people and property under difficult circumstances.

Finally, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to an equitable, transparent, and inclusive process that respects the rights of all affected persons and contributes to long-term community wellbeing. The *Nuevos Horizontes* resettlement project reflects that commitment in practice.

With an investment of more than RD\$18 billion, this new community has been developed to provide resettled families with high-quality housing, secure land tenure, and long-term support for economic self-sufficiency. The development includes 653 homes, all delivered with property titles, and full access to essential services such as water, electricity, paved roads, schools, daycare centers, recreational areas, churches, a marketplace, and a cemetery. Each family also receives a 1.5 *tarea* plot of land to support subsistence agriculture, regardless of whether they owned land at their previous location.

*Nuevos Horizontes* is therefore more than a housing initiative; it is the foundation for a thriving, sustainable community that will serve the region for generations to come. The first 24 families have already moved into their new homes, and the project will continue in phases until all eligible families are resettled.

## Reported Legal Proceedings

We are aware of public statements suggesting that two constitutional protection actions (*amparos*) were filed on May 20, 2025, before the Superior Administrative Court, reportedly in relation to the El Naranjo TSF. As of today, we have not received formal notice of any such proceedings and therefore cannot confirm whether any legal action has in fact been instituted.

What we have seen in press reports indicates that the plaintiffs appear to be affiliated with the same anti-mining organisations that sponsored the discredited Emerman report, as well as with an individual who has participated actively in the mediation process concerning compensation for crop valuations. The timing of the reported filing—coinciding precisely with Dr. Orellana’s visit—raises questions as to whether this was intended primarily as a media strategy rather than a genuine legal recourse.

If proceedings are indeed underway, Pueblo Viejo will of course respond through the proper legal channels. We trust in the Dominican judiciary to assess the matter on its merits and to ensure that the rule of law prevails.

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Pueblo Viejo remains committed to constructive and transparent engagement with all stakeholders, including international actors such as the United Nations Special Rapporteurs. We reiterate our invitation for Dr. Orellana to visit our operation. A direct, on-the-ground assessment would provide valuable context and help ensure that any conclusions drawn are based on a full and accurate understanding of our practices.

We remain committed to cooperating with all legitimate oversight processes and to continuing our work in a manner that upholds the highest standards of environmental and social responsibility.

## About Pueblo Viejo

Pueblo Viejo is located in the Dominican Republic, approximately 100 kilometers northwest of the capital city of Santo Domingo and is operated by Pueblo Viejo Dominicana—a joint venture between Barrick (60%) and Newmont (40%). Construction of the Pueblo Viejo project started in 2008, with first production in 2012. The company’s workforce is 97% Dominican. In 2020, the conversion of the mine’s Quisqueya 1 power plant to natural gas was successfully completed. This conversion from fuel oil to natural gas will decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 30% and nitrogen oxide by 85%, further reducing Pueblo Viejo’s impact on the environment. An agribusiness project is also planned as an additional benefit for the local communities.