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At Barrick Pascua-Lama, respect for our neighbors and the environment is central to everything that we do. We respect the rights of the Indigenous Peoples who live near our project, including their right to self-determination. This is why we address our challenges with honesty, openness and transparency. We want to be a contributor to the local community and local projects.

The Memorandum of Understanding is a reflection of this approach. Contrary to the accusation in the article that this process was “illegal”, the Memorandum was signed by all participating communities and respects Chilean law. Moreover, the Diaguitas communities have their own lawyers to represent their interests.

The Memorandum of Understanding was created to provide Diaguitas communities with access to information and experts so that they could assess the positive and negative impacts of the project. This is a pioneering initiative in Chile and we understand we have more work to do in explaining how the Memorandum of Understanding works and why it was created. Indeed, Barrick and the communities participating in the information exchange facilitated through the Memorandum of Understanding were invited to explain how it worked to communities in the Huasco Valley, within the framework of the public-private working table.

The Memorandum of Understanding allows Indigenous Communities and Barrick Pascua-Lama to work together towards a common diagnosis and an evaluation of the subjects of interest. These include glaciers, water and archaeological heritage, as well as the potential opportunities for development and the benefits communities can receive from the project.

The Memorandum of Understanding is open to any Diaguitas community that wishes to participate. Some communities have decided not to participate and we respect their decision. However, our invitation to participate remains open.

Via the Memorandum of Understanding, participating communities selected independent experts to assist them in analyzing project impacts. Barrick has funded this work, but the experts are independent and will prepare their own report.

The funding information and the Memorandum of Information are available in a webpage administered by the participating Diaguitas communities. The link is www.diaguitasdelhuasco.org.

At Barrick Pascua-Lama we are progressing along a new road of dialogue and work in partnership with local communities and local companies; and of ongoing communication with the political and regulatory authorities, because we are convinced that the creation of shared value is the only way we can proceed in harmony with our neighbors.