

## **Speech by Angélica Amanda Andrade on 8 September 2019 before the UN Principles for Responsible Investment in Paris**

As a child growing up in Brumadinho, often I would look up at the surrounding mountains and see the giant holes caused by the local mining. I would see the train loaded with iron ore passing through the town center.

And as someone who grew up in Brumadinho, I could never imagine that the activity that sustained my little town would, in the future, destroy it in such a brutal way.

When Natalia started working at Vale, as a family, we were all very proud. Working for a company that promotes such a safety-conscious image, we never imagined she would be at risk leaving for work that morning. Regrettably, Vale's negligence and deception have proved us wrong.

Today I am here speaking not only for myself and my family, but for my town of Brumadinho. For within this small town of mine, everyone is connected.

Everyone has been afflicted by the atrocity. By raising awareness of the devastation that irresponsible mining can cause, we can compel the mining sector to take effective measures to prevent catastrophes like those of Brumadinho and Mariana from ever happening again because sadly, they are not isolated cases. There are other dams that have collapsed and many that can collapse.

In Brumadinho the consequences of Vale's crime didn't end on 25 January.

It has led to attempts of suicide and death caused by the depths of depression. Since the death of my sister, I have developed depression and PTSD. I am able to be here speaking today because I have faith that Natalia is in a better place and also because of medical treatment and medication.

I met Helena who lost her only two children, her daughter-in-law and her soon to be grandchild to the tragedy. A family vacation turned into a nightmare she lives through each and every day. Vale destroyed her life and omitted to contact her to discuss repairing measures.

My dad no longer goes fishing once a week. The level of contamination in the river is so high that it doesn't allow him or anyone to go near it.

More than that, every time he looks at the river, he is haunted by the mud that killed his daughter and many others he knew and loved. These tragic stories and many others similarly haunting ones stain the streets of what was once a lively Brumadinho. There are details too gruesome to be shared here.

The mental torture began as soon as news of the rupture started spreading.

My mom was working in the city center and she described the moment as a scene from a horror movie: police evacuating the streets, people frantically crying and running, and phone lines became overloaded. Soon many helicopters started flying around non-stop for two months. Our humble town became something similar to a war zone. It was complete chaos. A

chaos that wouldn't come to an end any time soon, as the news of the disappearance of the disaster echoed through the community of Brumadinho.

For more than a week, my family and I waited for Natalia's body to be found. For more than a week we suffered the uncertainty of not knowing the fate of my sister: whether she had passed, if she was hurt in the woods or perhaps safe, but badly injured and with no memory in a hospital. After more than a week, her body was found. Though we struggled with the news, we were thankful that she was found intact. However that was not the reality for many families as many others were found mutilated and, up to this day, there are 21 families still waiting to find some closure by burying their loved ones. For two weeks there were burials every 15 minutes in both of our cemeteries. It is crucial for all of us all 272 families are able to have a proper funeral, and that should be the focus of the reparation measures.

Aside from the psychological consequences impacted onto the community. Brumadinho has also faced physical ones. The dust brought by the vehicles working at the site is causing respiratory problems and the consequences of such exposure over a long period of time are unknown. It's absurd that effective measures to counteract these issues have not been put in place for the past six months.

My uncle works at Vale and his life was spared by minutes. The bus he took to work in the morning was full of people, yet that afternoon it came back empty. My friend Josy also works there, luckily she was off that day but her sister who was 5 months pregnant wasn't, and died trying to drive away from the mud.

One would expect that survivors would receive appropriate support from Vale. On the contrary, some were even asked to work alongside the firemen instead, opening themselves to the chance of finding the mutilated body parts of their friends, imagining that it could have been them. I don't have any other word for that except "cruelty." Vale should consider retiring the survivors with the same benefits as the next of kin to the deceased.

Vale should be ashamed to say that life is their priority. The actions of the company have not matched their publicized ethos. The community feels the settlement reached in Brazil is very unfair. Many families have accepted it because they don't have the strength to fight for justice. The amounts agreed on are very disproportionate to the damage caused. Why is my pain as a sister considered significantly less than that of a parent or a spouse?

We felt disregard when Vale's president at the time failed to show respect and compassion by neglecting to stand up during the moment of silence for the victims. Vale has also been insisting that they are fully supporting the victim's families by providing medical assistance, but that is not true. I've financed all the medical help I've needed.

We want the future actions of the mining sector to prove that safety and the lives of their employees plus the communities that are affected by it are truly their priority.

Higher standards should be implemented, especially in countries like Brazil where the government fails to perform effective inspection.

When problems are highlighted during assessments or when employees see potential problems, we want hasty action to solve the matters.

Vale was aware that the dam in Brumadinho was condemned, and instead of evacuating everyone and closing the site, it chose to hire another company – TÜV SÜD, that gave them the approval they needed to continue working.

This is unacceptable and we need to ensure that this does not happen in the future. We need those responsible to be punished. Deciding to reduce costs and increase revenue at the expense of safety leads to devastating consequences as seen in Brumadinho and Mariana. Investors, I implore you to understand your responsibility in this. Is it worth it to see your bank accounts filled with money knowing that it is covered in blood?