

## Poverty-Environment Initiative's work in Philippines and Lao PDR

The Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is a global programme that supports country-led efforts to mainstream poverty-environment objectives into national development and sub-national development planning, from policymaking to budgeting, implementation and monitoring. With both financial and technical support, PEI assists government decision-makers and a wide range of other stakeholders to manage the environment in a way that improves livelihoods and leads to sustainable growth. The overall aim is to bring about lasting institutional change and to catalyze key actors to increase investment in pro-poor environmental and natural resource management.

A key area of the PEI's work in developing nations is addressing the need for improved management of investments in natural resource industries. The growing flow of national investments and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to these countries has exacerbated the need for capacity building in government institutions to evaluate and monitor the social and environmental risks of these investments, and for a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the ability of local governments of maximizing public revenues and their redistribution, and promoting re-investments of revenues in economically sustainable activities that promote gender equality, human rights and environmental conservation. In the same direction, the PEI has worked with governments of countries like Philippines, Laos and some African nations towards strengthening their ability to negotiate investment terms with investors, assist in the implementation of social programmes around natural resource industries, promote appropriate business models, improve the capacity of local businesses to benefit from FDI projects, establish transparent and accountable mechanisms for revenue management, establish safeguards for social and environmental risks of investment projects, improve regulatory structures and ensure sanctions for non-compliance of contracts.

The PEI has been working in the Philippines to provide technical assistance for promoting responsible mining practices and to help stop and reverse the destruction of biodiversity and ecosystems generated due to unsustainable mining activities. These have had harmful repercussions on the lives and livelihoods of indigenous communities whose subsistence depend upon said natural resources, leading to the displacement of local communities and violation of indigenous people's rights. The assistance provided by PEI has led to efforts that represent a step forward in fostering transparency and accountability in public institutions involved in Environment and Natural Resources management. Revenues from these industries have been re-invested in public infrastructure for the local communities, and on health, education, housing and cultural development.

In the past 2 decades Lao PDR has seen rapid economic growth accompanied by a large flow of FDI in natural resource industries such as agriculture, mining and forestry; many of which have resulted in the extended destruction of the environment, relocation and loss of livelihoods of local communities due to forced displacements and poor redistribution of revenues to local communities. The PEI's work with the Lao's ministry of Natural Resource and Environment aimed to establish procedures to carry environmental and social impact assessment and monitoring processes for investment projects; and to create opportunities to regain lost livelihoods and increase community participation in economic development. These efforts are a