



Republic of the Philippines

## National Economic and Development Authority XI

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1<sup>st</sup> of a Series

### Addressing the Social Impacts of Mining in Mt. Diwata



(Davao City, 28 July 2016) Barangay Mt. Diwata, or commonly known as Diwalwal, is located in the Municipality of Monkayo, Compostela Valley Province in Davao Region. The discovery of gold in this mountain barangay in 1983 triggered a gold rush to the area. Since then, the population of Diwalwal continued to soar thus, multiplying the number of small-scale mining operations all over the area.

It is of public knowledge that large amounts of gold have been extracted by the small-scale miners since the beginning of the gold-rush up to the present. As one of the consequences of the mining activities in the area, the Naboc and Agusan rivers are heavily contaminated with mercury and cyanide from artisanal mining operations. The National Government, realizing the importance of protecting the environment from further destruction by these activities, as well as to maximize the utilization of the mineral potential of the area, declared the Diwalwal Mineral Reservation Area (DMRA). The barangays included in the DMRA are: Mt. Diwata, Upper Ulip, Tubo-Tubo, Naboc, and Salvacion in the municipality of Monkayo; Mangayon in the municipality of Compostela all in the province Compostela Valley; barangays of Simulao, Cabasagan, San Jose, Carmen, and Poblacion in the municipality of Boston and barangay Aliwagwag in Cateel all in Davao Oriental.

The DMRA's population in 2010 has already reached 47,795 composed of migrants mostly from neighboring towns and other islands seeking to benefit from mining activities. Aside from the migrants, the DMRA is home to some Indigenous Peoples (IPs) of the Region. Four of the major IP communities belong to the Mandaya, Manobo, Dibabawon and Manguangam tribes.

The effects of mining activities and the prospect of more livelihood and employment opportunities arising from the migration resulted to the proliferation of artisanal mining methods. Mining has also diverted the customary practices of the IPs within the DMRA and those of the adjoining municipalities. In addition, increased incidence of health and security problems have afflicted the area.

The Diwalwal Mineral Reservation Area Development Plan (DMRADP), 2012-2032, formulated by the DENR-led Program Monitoring and Coordination Center (PMCC) of the National Task Force Diwalwal (NTFD) member-agencies and other stakeholders, seeks to address such effects through a long-term development framework.

One of the development goals identified in the DMRADP is to increase access of communities therein to social services and productive employment opportunities. Given Diwalwal's existing social situation and pressing challenges, such as widespread poverty; looming health hazards from unrelenting mining activities; poor housing conditions; and low access to basic social services, the Government's overarching goal shall be to improve the quality of life of the residents.

As such, the DMRADP stresses the importance of residents attaining sufficient levels of income that shall result from enhanced livelihood skills, good health, quality education with recognition of indigenous people's culture, and sense of well-being given proper housing conditions and adequate social welfare services.

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*(Jaime P. Mallare, NEDA XI).*