

PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

The Poverty Environment Initiative project launched in Rwanda

Kigali, 02 August 2007: The second phase of the Rwanda Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI II) was launched yesterday in Kigali. The programme aims to enhance the contribution of sound environmental management to poverty reduction, sustainable economic growth and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The programme is led by the Ministry of Lands, Environment, Forests, Water and Mines (MINITERE) and the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), and aims at integrating environment into national policy and district planning, policy and budget processes.

The main purpose of the first phase was to ensure the integration of environment into the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) during its formulation phase. The second Phase will be articulated around Rwanda's medium term needs, namely capacity building for environmental mainstreaming and sound environmental management at the local, district, and national level, to enable successful implementation of the EDPRS and its environmental commitments.

“The UNDP and UNEP partnership under the Poverty Environment Initiative programme has evidently facilitated participating countries including Rwanda to approach poverty reduction strategies through integration of environment in national policy, planning and budgetary processes”, said Patricia Hjabakiga, Minister of State in Charge of Land and Environment.

The second phase of the PEI has five main outputs: an improved capacity within key ministries and institutions to understand and analyse links between poverty and environment and to integrate environment into policymaking, planning and budgets; an improved capacity at district level to understand and analyse links between poverty and environment and to integrate environment into development planning; an increased awareness and more effective participation of stakeholders in environmental policy and planning processes at both district and national level; an improved national funding levels for investing in environmental sustainability; and an improved capacity for monitoring poverty and environment linkages at both national and district level.

“Environmental degradation is directly linked to impoverishment of the people, many of them relying on the natural resources” said Mustapha Soumaré, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator. “I hope the Poverty Environment Initiative project will contribute to prevent in more efficient and effective way to the environmental and economic risks we face and will contribute to the achievement of our long-term goals such as the EDPRS and the MDGs and the establishment of the healthy sustainable development and prosperity of this country”, added Soumaré.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Hon. James Musoni, appreciated the continued support given by UN agencies in various fields and particularly the environment sector. “This project is a clear testimony of how UN has regarded environment management as cornerstone to sustainable development”, said the Minister.

He added that Poverty Reduction and Environment are placed high priority among the development priorities of the Government of Rwanda. “This project fits well in the framework of the EDPRS where all the sectors will have linkages to reduce poverty through enhancing sound environment

management, promoting sustainable economic growth with ultimate target of achieving the Millennium Development Goals”, Musoni said.

This second phase will run over 3 years for a total budget of US\$ 2,3 Million from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNDP.

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