

PRESS RELEASE

Women's group cites SPI development initiatives

The *Gender Advocates – Women in Government Service* (GA-WINGS) of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Regional Office 10 lauded STEAG State Power Inc (SPI) for its significant contribution to community development.

During a *lakbay-aral* conducted recently to the various SPI – initiated social development projects in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, the group cited the company's numerous poverty-alleviation programs including initiatives aimed at empowering women. The visit is part of the group's participation in the month-long commemoration of March as *Women's Month*.

GA-WINGS NEDA-10 Chapter President Myrna Banaag said the visit to the GK Organic Garden Project at the San Roque GK Village as well as an interaction with women beneficiaries of the Villa Kusina Kitchenette Livelihood Project enabled them to appreciate the private sector's significant contribution to the government's thrust of poverty alleviation and people empowerment.

SPI's Organic Garden Project has been implemented since 2004 as one of the livelihood development interventions for families relocated at the San Roque GK Village due to the on-going construction of the 210MW Mindanao Coal-Fired Power Plant Project. Family beneficiaries involved in the project gets an additional average income of about P700 a week. On the other hand, the *Villa Kusina Project* enabled a group of plain housewives to engage in a viable restaurant business providing food and catering services to SPI employees as well as power plant construction workers, engineers, and other visitors.

SPI also implements numerous projects and activities aimed at protecting the environment. These include an extensive reforestation project covering more than 2,000 hectares in Cagayan de Oro City and Misamis Oriental, mangrove rehabilitation and river-bank rehabilitation project.

"We are taking a pro-active stance in social and environmental sustainability as part of the company's commitment to improve quality of lives of the people especially those living within the vicinity of the power plant project" says Ghaye Alegrio, SPI Community Development Manager.

SPI is currently putting-up Mindanao's first-ever coal-fired power plant at the PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate. Once operational by end of 2006, the power plant will augment the supply of electricity to Mindanao representing 15% of the island's total electricity requirement.

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PHOTO CAPTION:

GK ORGANIC GARDEN - A resident of GK San Roque Village boasts of his organically-grown high-value vegetable. The project forms part of SPIs integrated and comprehensive approach in providing better opportunities for the people from its host communities. The project is implemented in partnership with the Couples for Christ, PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority, LGU Villanueva, and the Rotary Club of PIE-MO