ADB Grant Launched to Help Tricycle Drivers in Puerto Princesa Friday, 10 February 2006 PUERTO PRINCESA, PHILIPPINESÂ - A scheme backed by an ADB grant of $240,000 to provide alternative livelihoods to tricycle operators and help cut down on pollution in Puerto Princesa City was launched today. The grant is extended through the Poverty and Environment Program (PEP), which will pilot test a number of strategies, as well as livelihood support activities among tricycle drivers to tackle environmental and the underlying social issues surrounding tricycles in the city. Taking a participatory approach, the project will strengthen the technical and entrepreneurial knowledge base of tricycle operators and drivers and establish a fund for drivers to upgrade the efficiency of their tricycle engines. It will also help enhance the city government's enforcement of its Clean Air Act, especially for roadside emission monitoring and catching smoke belchers. The lessons learned from the project will assist in the formulation and replication of the strategies in other cities in the Philippines. Puerto Princesa, which prides itself as the cleanest city in the country, is noted as a tourist destination as the capital of Palawan, the province known as the "last frontier" of the Philippines. However, just like any other thriving city in the country, it is confronted with problems of ambient air and noise pollution, particularly from the proliferation of motorcycles and tricycles. Noise emissions reach 90-97 decibels (dB), a serious problem given that some studies suggest that prolonged exposure to noise levels at or above 80 dB can cause deafness. The bikes clog the streets with their number and relative low speed and are perceived to be more accident prone than four-wheeled vehicles. The number of tricycles have been increasing due to high unemployment and absence of alternative livelihoods among the drivers; the limited road network; and the rise in the size of the commuting population. Compounding the problem is the fact that most tricycle drivers are low earners. In a survey conducted by ADB, the majority (70%) of the drivers earn a daily net income of between P100 and P150, or less than $3, which leaves little room for tricycle maintenance that could cut down on noise and maintenance. The project was inaugurated today by city Mayor Edward Hagedorn. Representatives from tricycle operators' and drivers' associations and nongovernment organizations, and officials from the central government are expected to attend the event. (Source: adb.org / 18 November 2005) RELATED STORIES Puerto Princesa Enacts Clean Air Ordinance - elac.org.ph Improving Air Quality and Livelihoods - usaid.govÂ Puerto Princesa Clean Air Program - cleanairnet.org/Jovenee Sagun Visit Puerto Princesa - The City In A Forest!
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