

Peace & Governance: Challenges for Sustainable Development of Lake Lanao, Southern Philippines

Keywords: basin governance, ecosystem services and basin management policies, sustainable development, cultural heritage

ABSTRACT

One of the world's ancient lakes, Lake Lanao in the province of Lanao Sur, southern Philippines, is home to the Meranaws, a Muslim group who inhabit the area since precolonial times. Lake Lanao is also a major economic resource of the country being the source of water of six hydropower plants, the *Agus Powerplant Complex*, which provide a big bulk of electricity to Mindanao, the country's southern most island and home to more than 30% of Filipinos. Lanao Sur is one of the poorest province and known to be hotbed of violent conflicts in the country, ranging from clan violence to historical Moro/Muslim armed secessionist rebellion and other forms of "shadow economy". Against this social backdrop, the study inquires on the state of sustainable development of Lake Lanao. From a survey of 500 respondents, key informant interviews and on-site observation, the study reveals that Lake Lanao matters has not trigger conflict among the locals. However, the professional groups and development actors in the area, private and government alike, deplore the absence of, or poor, governance of Lake Lanao which, they argue, abetted the socially and environmentally damaging monopolistic control and utilization of the Lake by a government-owned and controlled corporation. The study highlights the (a) challenges of competing resource use, between local - subsistence and cultural - versus national, highly economic ; and (b) effective governance in addressing peace and security in the locality as pillars of sustainable development.