



**SPE**  
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## **“Does the Oil and Gas Industry Reduce or Increase Poverty in Developing Countries?”**

*Bernard Ross*, Senior Health and Social Impact Engineer

**26<sup>th</sup> February, 2009 – 17:00 – 18:00 p.m.**

**Sala Barbara – V Palazzo Uffici Eni**

### **A talk with ...**

*BERNARD ROSS* is working as Senior Health and Social Impact Engineer at Agip KCO on the Full Field Development project. After a first career in education, he studied Third World Development and embarked on a career firstly with NGOs and disaster relief agencies in Asia and Africa, and then as a consultant on sustainable development policy with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Development Programme, the World Bank, and others. Since then he has managed the Social Investment Programme on the BTC Pipeline in Turkey, and worked for Shell, developing programmes for Far Eastern Russian Indigenous Minorities impacted by the Sakhalin II development.

### **About ...**

For years the accepted economic wisdom was that direct foreign investment of any kind was always beneficial to developing countries. Not only would it bring jobs, the economic “trickle-down” would boost the economy all round, enabling developing countries to tackle problems of poverty and disease. The experience of the last fifty years seems to indicate the contrary – that exploitation of oil and gas (or any other valuable mineral resource), seems to increase wealth disparity, exacerbate poverty, and increase the likelihood of conflict.

The modern approach, fast becoming standard across the industry, is to ensure that the poorest sections of society benefit from the company’s presence through targeted impact mitigation and long-term social investment, designed to spread the wealth generated to the sections of the community which need it most.

The presentation examines ways in which oil companies can, and do, contribute positively to poverty reduction in the countries where they operate.