

Public Statement:

Stop Mekong Mainstream Dams - Stop All Investment

19 February 2014

A cascade of hydropower dams planned and being built on the Upper and Lower Mekong River mainstream pose significant threat to the Mekong River and its people. Scientific evidence to date has demonstrated the enormous impact these dams will have on the region by blocking vital fish migration routes, stopping sediment flows important to agricultural production, and destroying the river's ecosystems and biodiversity.

Already six hydropower dams have been built on the Upper Mekong mainstream in China. Since mid-December 2013, the Mekong's water levels have suffered from sharp decreases and increases, which have affected the livelihoods, and local and national economies of people living along the Mekong River in countries downstream. While these impacts may be associated with the Upper Mekong dams, no formal investigations have been carried out and no one has ever taken responsibility for the projects' impacts.

On the Lower Mekong River a series of dams have now been fast-tracked for development, without adequate study of the dams' transboundary and cumulative impacts. People in the region have yet to be consulted and local wisdom and their knowledge of the river has been ignored. Moreover, The Mekong River Commission has failed to effectively ensure regional decision-making over whether or not these projects go forward.

The Xayaburi Dam - the first dam on the Lower Mekong mainstream in Laos – is now claimed to be 21% complete. However, the project poses enormous uncertainty, as its risks have never been calculated. No transboundary impact assessment was carried out, there is no regional agreement amongst Mekong River Commission member governments, and the developers have yet to demonstrate that it will be able to effectively mitigate the dam's impacts to fisheries and sediment flows.

The Don Sahong Dam, the second dam proposed by Laos, now threatens to follow the same path as the Xayaburi Dam. The Lao government has announced its intention to construct the dam without regional agreement, and with no adequate transboundary assessment.

With this uncertainty, not only the Mekong River and its people, but also project investors, will certainly face significant risks, including to their expected financial benefit.

With so much at stake to the Mekong River and its people, we, members of civil society groups and local communities who are attending the regional public forum on "*The Don Sahong Dam in Lao PDR: perspectives from Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam*" on 19 February 2014 at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, jointly demand that Mekong Governments recognize the impacts suffered by people who have been affected by large hydropower dams, consider the demands of local communities and respect their rights to participate in decision-making. Therefore, the Mekong governments should make every effort to immediately stop all construction on the Mekong mainstream dams and ensure that no future agreements are signed.

We demand that all Thai banks investing in the Xayaburi Dam, including the Siam Commercial Bank, Kasikorn Bank, Bangkok Bank, and Krung Thai Bank, TISCO and Export-Import Bank of Thailand, should stop all future loans to the project and immediately release to the public all reports it has commissioned regarding the project.

Finally, while the Don Sahong Dam's Concession Agreement has not yet been signed and no banks have publically committed to finance the Don Sahong Dam, we demand that no investment in this risky project is made.

Signed by

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