



Translated version

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H.E. Lim Kean Hor

Chairman of Cambodia National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Council for Cambodia

Ministry of Water Resource & Meteorology

No 47 Norodom Blvd.

12210 Phnom Penh

Subject: Thank you letter for your kind collaboration with Rivers Coalition in Cambodia and civil society concerns on the proposed Xayaburi Dam.

Your Excellency Lim Kean Hor,

On behalf of the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the Cambodian National Mekong Commission for your kind collaboration in allowing our representatives to participate in the national consultation on the proposed Xayaburi Dam of Lao PDR on February 10th and 28th, 2011.

There is no doubt that representatives from the civil society organizations are willing to contribute to the efforts made by the Royal Government of Cambodia to serve the interests of our people. We are most grateful to have had such an opportunity to bring knowledge and information from the communities to be shared with the representatives from the public agencies of the Royal Government of Cambodia during the consultation workshop of the Xayaburi Dam.

On this occasion, let us inform Your Excellency that the representatives of civil society organizations and riparian communities are concerned about the following points regarding the Xayaburi Dam and its expected impact on Cambodia:

- Fisheries losses: The Xayaburi Dam's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) lacks even basic information on fisheries, including species diversity, migration patterns, ecological needs, and anticipated impacts. The Mekong River

Commission's Strategic Environmental Assessment warns that the Xayaburi Dam will block the migration of least 27 fish species, two of which make up around 13% of total catch. Global experts have already stated that the impact to fisheries from Mekong mainstream dams cannot be mitigated, and the EIA report fails to provide any convincing evidence otherwise.

- Ecosystem and biodiversity damage: While the Mekong River Commission's Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report, released in October 2010, identifies at least 41 fish species, including the iconic Mekong Giant Catfish, at risk of extinction by mainstream dams in this stretch of the river, the company's EIA report does not even identify endangered or endemic species in the vicinity of the proposed dam.
- Transboundary impacts: The EIA report only considers impacts within the impoundment area and 10 km downstream of the project. According to the MRC's SEA report, transboundary ecosystem and social impacts are expected to be felt in Cambodia- for example on migratory fisheries and sediment flows - if the dam is built.
- Agriculture losses: While the Mekong River's fertile sediment load is known to be important to the region's fisheries and rich agricultural productivity, the EIA report fails to even consider the dam's impacts to sediment movements, reduction of fine sediment and changes to the water flow velocity which will create a negative impact on natural fish production as well as a reduction in soil fertility for river bank and river flood plain farming systems. Moreover, if the water velocity will be significantly changed, this could also lead to changes in their farming practices as a whole. As a consequence, the country's farmers living along Cambodia's riverbanks and dependent on the river's flood plain farming systems will be adversely impacted and more vulnerable to increased poverty and difficulty in adapting to the farming impacts.
- Impacts on livelihoods: While the SEA report estimates that 2,100 people will be resettled and a further 202,000 people directly affected by the Xayaburi Dam, the EIA scarcely considers how the fishery and agricultural losses will impact livelihoods, food security and local economies. Furthermore, Cambodia will also suffer from the impact of fish species losses, reduced fish catches, and reduced sediment loads.

Given the fact that the transboundary impacts of the Xayaburi Dam to Cambodia were not considered in the project's EIA, we would like to request Your Excellency to call for a halt to the regional decision-making process until a new EIA report is done in accordance to international standards. Furthermore, as the Mekong River is

supplying millions of Cambodian people a form of income, livelihood and food security *-for free-* we kindly call on the Cambodian Government to call for a halt to the regional decision-making process of the Xayaburi Dam in Laos as the recommendation of the SEA report to halt decision making for 10 year to further more researches.

We are very happy to learn that Your Excellency also shares many of these concerns with us. Please accept our sincere thanks to you and your colleagues. We are looking forward to further collaboration with you and your colleagues under the unit umbrella of The Royal Government of Cambodia to bring benefits and to protect the interests of Cambodian people.

Yours Sincerely,



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