

01 April 2014

OPEN LETTER TO:

- **Prime Minister of Royal Government of Cambodia**
- **Prime Minister of Vietnam**
- **Prime Minister of Royal Government of Thailand**
- **Prime Minister of Lao-PDR**

Subject: Call to halt construction of Don Sahong Dam and stop making any development on the Mekong Mainstream Dam

We would like to inform that the 260 MW Don Sahong Dam is one of eleven hydropower projects currently being and proposed for construction on the lower Mekong River after Xayaburi. It is located two kilometres from the Lao-Cambodian border in Champasak Province, Lao PDR. Electricity from Don Sahong dam is planned for export to Thailand. If the dam built, it will block the Hou Sahong channel, one of the main channels that comprise the Khone Falls section on the Mekong. This Mega First Corporation Berhad (MFCB) of Malaysia is the main investor.

In October 2013, Lao PDR notified the Mekong River Commission (MRC) that the Don Sahong Dam is “not on the Mekong mainstream¹” which only needs to engage the “prior notification” process instead of the “prior consultation” process. In contrast, the MRC Secretariat has stated “the Don Sahong was a mainstream dam”², this includes the Basin Development Plan and the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the mainstream dams, all documents that were endorsed by the Government of Lao. To date, there has been no genuine effort to meaningfully consult Cambodian government authorities or affected communities downstream in Cambodia. According to the site visit on Don Sahong Dam Site and the meeting with government of Lower Mekong Countries, Development Partners, and Scientists during 11-12 March 2014, we as the CSOs representative have observed as following:

1. No in-depth study on fishery resources, fish migration from the lower to upper Mekong River especially in the Si Phandon and Ramsar site, fish passage, and Irrawaddy dolphin.
2. No Prior Notification Procedure Consent and Agreement (PNPCA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in the downstream countries
3. No Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment (Tran-EIA) in Cambodia as well as in the Mekong Delta

The recent study by Inland Fishery Research and Development Institute (IFReDI) of Fishery Department of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF) highlights changes in availability of inland

¹ Mekong River Commission Secretariate. 03 Oct 2013. Lao PDR submits notification on Don Sahong Hydropower Project (<http://www.mrcmekong.org/news-and-events/news/lao-pdr-submits-notification-on-don-sahong-hydropower-project/>)

² Mekong River Commission Secretariate. 2007. Environmental Impact Assessment Report Don Sahong Hydropower Project, Lao PDR. Mekong River Commission Secretariat, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 19 November 2007.

fisheries due to the Mainstream Hydropower development is likely to have serious negative impacts on food and nutrition security and public health. Also, the finding of the research on “Tonle Sap Now and in the Future” illustrated that hydropower dam development in the Mekong Mainstream will have major environmental, social, and economic impact to the Tonle Sap System³.

For this reason, we, the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) and Tonle Sap and Mekong community representatives (including thumbprints) would like to inform the four Prime Ministers of the Lower Mekong Countries about our campaign against this dam. We have conducted national workshop about the dam, engaged in radio talk show, held press conferences at a national and international media to show our concerns to relevant stakeholders including ASEAN leaders recently in Yangon, Myanmar to urge them to reconsider the development of the Mekong Mainstream Dams and to stop Don Sahong Dam and stop making any decision on the Mekong Mainstream Dam.

Please Sam Dech, Excellencies of the four governments of the Lower Mekong countries accept our highest regards.

Respectfully,

Representatives of Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) and Tonle Sap and Mekong communities:

The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF)

3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN)

Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT)

Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA)

My Village Organization (MVi)

Cambodian Volunteers for Society (CVS)

Save Vulnerables Cambodia (SVC)

Community Economy Development (CED)

Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)

Khmer Farmer's Association (KFA)

Northeast Rural Development Organization (NRD)

Ponlok Khmer

³ TSA & SNEC., 2013. Tonle Sap now and in the future?, Final report of the Exploring Tonle Sap Future study, Aalto University and 100Gen Ltd. With Hatfield Consultants Partnership, VU University Amsterdam, EIA Ltd. And institute of Technology of Cambodia, in partnership with Tonle Sap Authority and Supreme National Economic Council. Water and Development Publication WD-11, Aalto University, Espoo, Finland.

Mlub Prumvihearthor Center (MPC)

Enviromental Cooperation and Tourism Organization (CETO)

Cambodian Rural Development Team (CRDT)

Conservation and Developmnet on Cambodia (CDCam)

EcoSun Cambodia

Tonle Sap Community representative

Mekong Community representative

Cc:

- Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM)
- Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC)
- Lao National Mekong Committee (LNMC)
- Vietnam National Mekong Committee (VNMC)
- Thai National Mekong Committee (TNMC)
- Mekong River Commission (MRC)
- Ministry of Mine and Energy (MoME)
- Ministry of Environment (MoE)
- Ministry of Tourism (MoT)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF)
- Ministry of Women Affair (MoWA)
- Development Partners (DPs)
- Local and International Media