

(Translated from the Khmer original)

**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION, RELIGION, KING**

25th November 2014

**A JOINT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITIES
AFFECTED BY THE LOWER SESAN 2 HYDROPOWER PROJECT**

Addressed to

**H.E. Samdech Akeak Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin,
President of the National Assembly of Cambodia**

We are representatives of indigenous or local Pou Nong, Charay, Kring, Prov, Lao and Khmer communities who are living along the Sesan and Srepok Rivers in northeastern Cambodia. Our villages are located in the area affected by the Lower Sesan 2 Hydropower Dam (LS2). They are Kbal Romeas, Sreko 1 & 2, Chrob, Kro Bey Chroum, Phlouk and Khsach Thmey Villages in Sesan District, Stung Treng Province. Villagers from six districts in Ratanakiri Province, namely Kon Mom, Lumphat, Vernsai, Taveng, Andongmeas and O'yadav Districts are also joining to issue this statement. All of us are very much concerned about the impacts that will be caused by LS2.

We have already submitted many statements and petitions to the Committee for Solving the Impacts of LS2 Hydropower Dam Project in Stung Treng, relevant Departments and Ministries of the Cambodian government and Chinese Embassy in Phnom Penh, because we have wanted to have a sincere dialogue with these organizations. However, to this day we have not received any response to our letters. Therefore, today we would like to submit this statement to the National Assembly of Cambodia.

We, community representatives, would like to **express our collective request to H.E. Samdech Akeak Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of Cambodia to intervene to immediately cancel the LS2 Hydropower Dam Project.**

First and foremost, we would like to state that we refuse to leave our village and want LS2 to be cancelled because;

- We are very happy to live in our village, which provides us with rich natural resources. These natural resources support our daily life. Moreover, culturally and ethnically, we have deep sentimental ties to our land, which our ancestors have left for us and future generations.
- We have beautiful land with rich natural resources that support our life and provide us with daily food and income sources. These natural resources include agricultural land, land reserved for future generations, forests to raise livestock, cemeteries and ancestral graves, forbidden and sanctuary forests, rivers and other resources under the water as well as on land. These natural resources are priceless.

- Rivers are especially important to us. We are living as fisher folks. We can earn cash income by selling fish. We also eat fish every day. If we lose access to the river, we cannot survive.
- Natural resources are also very closely connected to our culture, tradition and daily life. Natural resources are indispensable to us. We believe in spirits that live in forests, mountains, rivers and everywhere else in our village. Spirits bring us happiness, protect us and our village, solve problems for us and help us build good harmony and solidarity in our community through various spiritual ceremonies. For example, every year we hold a ceremony to worship Kro Harm Kor Spirit at the Kro Harm Kor Spirit house, which is located on a bank of the Sesan River and is only 5 km from the LS2 construction site. We have asked Kro Harm Kor Spirit to bring happiness to our community and to protect our rivers and keep them flow naturally for us and our children and grandchildren. Kro Harm Kor Spirit is important because the Spirit connects us with our ancestors. If we lose this sacred place because of LS2, we will lose our culture, tradition and identity. Once we lose our culture and tradition, it is impossible to recover them.
- Our culture, tradition, guardian spirits, warning forests, ancestral graves and rivers cannot be compensated by money or moved to other places. If we move out from our village, we will lose our identity.
- We have heard from local authorities that Kro Bey Chroum and Khsach Thmey Villages will not be flooded by LS2's reservoir. However, these villages are flooded every year, and every time flood takes place, we have to escape to higher places. We are very much concerned. We believe, if LS2 is built close to our village, flooding will become worse and we no longer can live where we live now.
- In accordance with the Chinese government's Guidelines for Environmental Protection in Overseas Investment and Cooperation, any activity or development project that harms or affects identities or spiritual places of Indigenous Peoples should not be implemented. These guidelines are very important in protecting the natural environment, culture and tradition of Cambodia from development projects invested by China. However, the Lower Sesan 2 Hydropower Company, a joint venture of China's Hydrolancang Company and the Royal Group, is not following them. We would like to ask the National Assembly members to please recognize this and urge the company to follow the guidelines to protect our country.
- LS2 will cut off the water flow from the Sesan and Srepok Rivers to the Mekong River's mainstream. Many fish species migrate to the Sesan and Srepok Rivers for breeding and spawning. LS2 will block the fish migration and cause huge negative impacts on fish and fishing both upstream and downstream, including fish in the Great Tonle Sap Lake and Mekong River as a whole. Fish is extremely important to all Cambodian people, not only to people living along rivers. Millions of Cambodians eat fish and earn income from fishing activities every day. We can say that fish is Cambodia's heritage. LS2 will damage Cambodia's heritage and is not a good development project.
- We think development should make ordinary Cambodian people like us happier. Authorities like you, who have more power and education than we do, should find good solutions to the problem of LS2 rather than making us despair and suffer by taking our land and natural

resources and relocating us. If LS2 were built near your house or at your ancestors' grave, how would you feel? Would you not feel the suffering?

We would like to request the National Assembly of Cambodia to kindly take the following actions:

- The National Assembly of Cambodia takes all the concerns and negative impacts relating to the LS2 Hydropower Project into serious account and intervenes to urge the Royal Government of Cambodia and other development proponents to immediately cancel the project.

Thank you very much for your time and kind attention, and we are looking forward to receiving a positive respond from you.

Sincerely yours,

Representatives from Kbal Romeas, Sreko 1 & 2, Chrob, Kro Bey Chroum, Phlouk and Khsach Thmey Villages, Sesan District, Stung Treng Province and community representatives from six districts of Lumphat, Kon Mom, Vernsai, Taveng, Andong Meas and O'yadav in Ratanakiri Province

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CC to:

- Ministry of Mines and Energy
- Ministry of Economy and Finance
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Rural Development
- Ministry of Water Resource and Metrology
- Chinese Embassy in Cambodia
- Lower Sesan 2 Hydropower Company (a joint venture of Hydrolancang and the Royal Group)
- UN High Commissioner in Cambodia
- Mekong River Commission
- Cambodian National Mekong Committee
- Lao National Mekong Committee
- Vietnam National Mekong Committee
- Thai National Mekong Committee
- The media and civil society organizations in Mekong Region and internationally