



អង្គការនៃអង្គការមិនមែនរដ្ឋាភិបាល ស្តីពីកម្ពុជា
The NGO Forum on Cambodia
ធ្វើការរួមគ្នាដើម្បីការវិវឌ្ឍសេចក្តីល្អ
Working Together for Positive Change

National Workshop Report

Concerns on Don Sahong Dam



March 20, 2014

PGCT, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Co-organized by:

The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) and Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC)

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Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank all participants from public agencies, civil society, research institutes and communities who attended and contributed to the workshop. We also thank all resource persons and guest speakers who shared their experience and knowledge with our participants and who made our dialogue more interactive and informative. Special thanks and gratitude go to our donor – Oxfam Australia (OAU) for financing the workshop and dialogue.

Last but not least, we thank our staff and colleagues from both NGOF and RCC who provided logistic supports for the smooth dialogue. Without their support, our national dialogue would meet difficulties.

List of Abbreviation

BDP	:	Basin Development Plan
CNMC	:	Cambodia National Mekong Committee
CSOs	:	Civil Society Organizations
EIA	:	Environment Impact Assessment
IR	:	International River
MFCB	:	Mega First Corporation Berhad
MIME	:	Ministry of Industry Mine and Energy
MoE	:	Ministry of Environment
MRC	:	Mekong River Commission
NGOF	:	the NGO Forum on Cambodia
OAU	:	Oxfam Australia
RCC	:	the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia
SEA	:	Strategic Environmental Assessment
TBEIA	:	Trans-boundary EIA
WCD	:	World Commission on Dam
WWF	:	World Wild Fund for Nature

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Introduction

The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) in collaboration with the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) organized a national workshop on “Concerns on the Don Sahong” to bring together relevant stakeholders of 122 participants (45 females = 37%) including government agencies, development partners, academia, fishery scientists, local and international NGOs, and communities in order to discuss the importance of the Mekong River and the challenges facing to their livelihood from the Don Sahong dam. The main objective of this workshop was to share information and increase awareness on the Don Sahong dam and its potential impacts to the Mekong and Tonle Sap communities’ livelihoods.

I. Opening Session:

Welcoming Remark by Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director, The NGO Forum on Cambodia

In his welcoming remarks, **Dr. Tek Vannara**, executive director of The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) welcomed all participants. In his welcome remark, Dr. Tek Vannara highlighted the importance and key objectives of the national workshop. The purpose of the workshop today is to hear concerns from different stakeholders and communities on the dam project so that collective concerns and measures can be developed and sent to relevant authorities to make informed decisions. He also briefed the participants about the Don Sahong Dam Project that is under feasibility study and an environmental impact assessment. Don Sahong Dam with capacity of 260 MW is one of the 12 planned hydropower dam projects on the Mekong Mainstream in Lao PRD. The proposed Don Sahong Dam is located 2 kilometers away from Lao-Cambodia border in Champasak province Lao PDR. The generated electricity will be sold to Thailand. If the proposed dam is built, it will block the natural flow of water in Hosahong stream, which is the mainstream of Mekong River. The proposed Don Sahong Dam is invested by Mega First Corporation Berhad, (MFCB), a Malaysia based corporation. On October, 2013, Lao government notified MRC that Don Sahong stream is not on the mainstream and thus, it does not required consultation with MRC country members. MRC has indicated that Don Sahong stream is a mainstream, as indicated in the various MRC’s documents, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Basin Development Plan (BDP) which Lao PDR also approved. Up to now Lao PDR has not shown its intention to consult with Cambodia and affected communities along the river. Dr. Tek highlighted that the National Workshop on Concerns of Don Sahong Dam is important to identify all key concerns of stakeholders and communities and present these concerns to concerned authorities. Finally, he encouraged all participants to participate and share all their concerns and so that a joint statement will be developed and submitted it to relevant authorities.

Remarks by Community Representative

A community representative was invited to express her concerns about the proposed Don Sahong Dam. In her welcoming remarks, she highlighted that the proposed dam project will likely affect our community’s livelihoods. It will affect fish migration. It will also affect

dolphins, which are tourism attraction. It will affect water quality and our life. Thus, I would like to appeal all authorities to halt the dam.

Opening Remarks by H.E. Tea Chhup, Deputy Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment (MoE).

In his opening remarks, H.E. Tea Chhup welcomed all participants who attended the national workshop. He also thanked NGOF and River Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) for organizing such forum and dialogue among concerned parties. He highlighted that what NGOF and RCC are doing today is in line with the government's recent plan – public forum. He said that the government has recently launched promotion of public forum and public engagement in government's activities. Therefore, the Government strongly supports and encourages civil society to have forum and dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

Regard to Don Sahong Hydropower Dam project in Lao PDR, **H.E. Tea Chhup** reported that the Royal Government of Cambodia along with other governments of Mekong River Commission (MRC) country members has sent our opposition to the proposed project in all levels of meetings including minister and prime minister meetings. He reported that next month there will be a prime minister meeting among Lao, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. He said one of the meeting agenda will be Don Sahong Hydropower Dam. Thus, the national workshop today is held in the right time to identify all concerns from all affected communities and civil society organizations. The concerns and issues discussed will be raised in the meeting. Finally, H.E. Tea Chhup asked and encouraged all participants to share and tell all concerns and he looked forward to receiving minute report and petition from the affected community.

In his opening remark, he declared the opening the National Workshop on Concern of Don Sahong Dam

II. Presentations

Introduction and update of Don Sahong Dam by H.E. Te Navuth, Secretary General of Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC)

H.E. Te Navuth briefed the participants about Mekong River, Mekong River Commission (MRC) and guideline and policy of MRC for conflict resolution. The Mekong River is one of the longest rivers in the world, flowing through six countries: China, Myanmar, Lao, Thailand, Cambodia, and down to Vietnam and South China Sea. The Mekong River is rich of natural resources, ecosystem and fish that provide protein to millions of people who depend on the river. Mekong River is good for navigation. It is also home of many endanger species and ecosystem.

Mekong River Commission (MRC) is an inter-governmental agency whose members are Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam. MRC was established in 1957 with four state members including Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam for their common specific interests – joint management of shared water resources and sustainable development of the Mekong River. MRC is a regional facilitating and advisory body governed by water and environment ministers of the four countries. MRC aims to ensure that the Mekong Water is developed in the most efficient manner that mutually benefits all member countries and minimizes adverse impact on local people and the environment in the Lower Mekong Basin.

Regarding to Don Sahong, **H.E. Te Navuth** reported that in October Lao PDR notified Cambodia and other member states about its plan to build hydropower dam on Don Sahong. Cambodia along with other member countries told Lao PDR to put the plan on hold. Cambodia protested that the proposed hydropower dam was on the mainstream of Mekong that required consultation from member states. Meeting was held in January, 2014 in Vientiane but agreement was not made. The different was that Lao PDR claimed that the proposed Don Sahong Hydropower dam was a tributary while Cambodia and other member countries claimed the proposed dam was the Mekong mainstream dam. Since then no meeting has ever organized. Thailand is a chairman. Since Thailand has domestic political conflict, it is not able to call for meeting.

H.E. Te Navuth also reported that Cambodia has recently organized technical inter-ministry consultation meeting. Based on the technical consultation meeting with different ministries, we all agreed that Don Sahong is the mainstream not tributary. This requires consultation with us and other member countries if Lao PDR wants to build the dam. We agreed and support MRC's assessment report and its recommendation. Digging and explosion and sound vibration will affect fishery and dolphins. Fish passage modifications are not properly done. Thus, we demand for proper cross trans-boundary environmental impact assessment before the dam could be constructed.

H.E. Te Navuth also highlighted that the national workshop today about Don Sahong with local communities and other civil society organizations is good event to identify all concerns and challenges. He wished to see more dialogues and understanding about the proposed Don Sahong Hydropower dam among Cambodian people, researchers and general public.

CSOs Perspectives on Don Sahong Hydro Dam: Report from Field Visit by Dr. Tek Vannara

Lao PDR recently organized field visit for relevant stakeholders from the country members to visit the proposed hydropower dam site. **Dr. Tek Vannara** along with other civil society leaders and representatives participated in the field trip. The following are key findings from the field visit:

- Cross trans-boundary EIA was not conducted.
- The current EIA reports have a lot of shortfalls
- The proposed measures, particularly fish passage modifications are too small and shallow
- Fish species are not properly identified and studied.
- Assessment of impact on ecosystem and ecotourism were not done

Recommendations from CSOs:

Position of CSOs is to halt the dam construction until Lao PDR implements the following actions:

- Conduct thorough EIA on downstream river and fishery resource, affected communities and Ramsar Site
- Consult with member countries
- MRC independently reviews the proposed Don Sahong Hydropower dam project
- Conduct trans-boundary EIA by involving all affected communities and stakeholders
- Respect the agreement signed in 1995 to notify, consult, agree, conduct strategic EIA

Impact of Don Sahong to the Mekong Dolphins by Gerry Ryan, World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF).

Mr. Gerry Ryan from WWF presented study on the possible impact of the proposed Don Sahong Hydro-Dam on Mekong Dolphins. He highlighted that proposed hydro-dam will adversely impact the Mekong dolphins both during construction and operation phases. During the construction phase, the excavation in the channel and immediately beside dolphins will cause serve disturbance and may damage their hearing. Dolphins use their hearing to navigate and find their food. When they have hearing problem, they may not be able to navigate and find their food. Subsequently, they would die from hearing problem.

During operation phase, the dam will release mud and make water quality bad that will affect ecosystem and fishery which are food for dolphins. The proposed dam will block natural flow of water and will adversely affect the fish migration and prey decline. The study concluded that the proposed hydropower dam in Don Sahong will pose a high risk to the Mekong's dolphins and their preys. The effects probably cannot be mitigated, given the limited and vague plans and measures outlined in the impact assessment reports.

Importance of Conducting Trans-boundary EIA – Mr. Danh Serey, EIA Dept. of MoE

Mr. Danh Serey, from Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Department of MoE defined trans-boundary EIA and highlighted why it is necessary to conduct trans-boundary EIA in Don Sahong Hydropower dam case. Trans-boundary EIA is a process of environmental impact assessment of a development project that has impact in two or more countries. Based on MRC's guideline, trans-boundary EIA is conducted to enhance and promote smooth collaboration among affected countries, communities as well as ensuring that environment and social being are well protected and enhanced. EIA was conducted only in Lao PDR territory but not in Cambodia. The proposed dam project site only 2 kilometer from Lao/Cambodia border where there is rich of ecosystem, wetland system, Ramsar site and many endanger species such as dolphins. The proposed hydropower dam project will have negative impact on these ecosystems in Cambodia. In his final presentation, Mr. Danh suggested that trans-boundary EIA, costs and benefit analysis and inclusive public participation be conducted and promoted in Cambodia to identify possible negative impact and appropriate measures to address the impact. He also recommended that benefit-sharing mechanism between Lao PDR and Cambodia be developed so that affected communities and environment impact can benefit and addressed appropriately.

An Analysis of Don Sahong's EIA Report by Ms. Ame Trandem, International Rivers (IR)

Ms. Ame's presentation focuses on an analysis and review of Don Sahong's EIA report. The review of Don Sahong's EIA indicates that the proposed Don Sahong Dam is likely to have significant impact on the Mekong River's fisheries, dolphins and ecosystem, as the dam construction will make noise and will block the main channel that allows for dry season migrations. The review also found that the EIA report lacks sufficient baseline data, is inconsistent, demonstrates the project developer has limited knowledge of the area and its ecosystem importance, and makes unsubstantiated claims. Despite the Don Sahong Dam

being two kilometers away from the Lao-Cambodian border, no transboundary impacts were considered. The International law requires transboundary EIAs for projects that are expected to have significant harm in the project site. There is insufficient and vague information/baseline data on the area's fisheries and fish migrations. Mitigation measures offered by the company remain unproven, opening up the region's fisheries and people to costly risks. Fish passage modifications were unproven. Based on the analysis, she provided a number of recommendations including:

- Look all options including not building the dam
- Look for an alternative place for building dam. Don Sahong and Khon Fall area rich in ecosystem and natural resources. For only 260 megawatts of electricity, Don Sahong Dam may not really worth the environmental, social, and cultural cost.
- Immediately halt all construction until necessary studies and measures (trans-boundary, fishery baseline study are done and proven to work.

Q & A Session:

Q: If we asked Lao PDR to stop Don Sahong Dam project, will Cambodia stop the dam in Stung Treng and Kratie too?

A: It is hard for me to answer whether we will build dam in Stung Treng or Sambo or not. It is not up to me. MIME is studying possibility and will propose to the Prime Minister. It depends on demand and supply. It may not relate to Don Sahong Dam.

Q: What are benefits to the affected communities in Cambodia?

A: Benefit-sharing – depends on EIA – What impact will we have? There are international practices or norms for benefit-sharing to compensate the affected communities. They may get jobs during construction, roads, electricity. Benefits depend on impacts – Now we are discussing about the impact. We all need electricity. We understand that Lao needs electricity too. As we all know, there is pros and cons in everything. Regional benefit-sharing efforts are made to ensure benefit sharing and to ensure sustainable hydropower dam project. Maybe Lao can sell us electricity with reasonable price.

Compensation – Lao is very strategic on this. They make it impossible for baseline data to exist. Cambodia may have a hard time to ask for compensation due to lack of data and impact. However, Cambodia has done good job so far to focus on fishery resources. I hope that Cambodia will take stronger position in few weeks. We know that the dam impact on fishery is so huge. Why not build another place which has less impact but similar electricity? Why still build in Don Sahong? I guess a few individuals have interest in the project.

Q: What is position of the Royal Government of Cambodia regarding the proposed Don Sahong Dam?

A: The Royal Government of Cambodia does not agree with the EIA reports and demands for trans-boundary EIA. We have shown our formal protest to our Lao counterpart in all meetings and events regarding to Don Sahong Dam.

III. Group Discussion: Concerns and Way Forward for Don Sahong

Participants were divided into three groups: researcher group, community group, and NGO group to discuss on two main questions below:

1. What are your three main concerns for Don Sahong Dam Project?
2. What are your three measures to address the concerns?

Results from Researcher Group:

Sector	Concerns	Solutions
Economic	Affect national economy Loss of fishery Loss of income	Build irrigation Agriculture techniques Conduct through EIA
Social	Health Education Community solidarity Tradition and culture	Social impact assessment Reinforce recommendation from EIA Participation from all stakeholders
Environment	Water quality Biodiversity Climate Change	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Trans-boundary EIA (TBEIA) Participatory action research

Results Presentation from NGO Group

Prioritized Concerns

1. People lack of information about the dam project
2. Community's concerns are not heard by relevant authorities
3. There is no consultation meeting among the four governments
4. Trans-boundary EIA was not conducted
5. Lack of support from authorities – knowledge, awareness
6. The government may not hear and address concerns of the affected communities

Solutions:

1. Postpone the dam construction till necessary and through trans-boundary EIA is conducted and appropriate measures are proven
2. Conduct trans-boundary EIA that involved and recognized by all relevant countries and CSOS and affected communities
3. Respect and implement 7 guidelines and principles of the World Commission on Dam (WCD) and MRC guidelines and agreements
4. Conduct public awareness raising
5. Organize community to have dialogues with decision makers
6. Identify strategies to put pressure on investors to postpone the project

Result from Community Groups

Concerns:

The proposed Don Sahong Dam will affect:

- Natural resources, which affecting our livelihoods
- Affect water quality which also affect fish and animals
- Affect tradition and culture of local communities when resettlement, relocation, etc

Solutions:

1. Conduct awareness raising to local communities
2. Ask CSOs and NGOs to support communities
3. Send our petition to government to express our concerns

Conclusion and Closing Session

The national workshop on Concern of Don Sahong Dam went smoothly. A joint statement was developed and approved by all participants. The joint statement reflected and integrated all key concerns of stakeholders and communities. All participants agreed to send petition to relevant authorities and the prime minister to convey their concerns to Lao government. Participants from affected communities also agreed to get signatures of support on the petition from their community members when they return home and send their signatures to the concerned authorities before April 5 when prime ministers of MRC countries meet in Vietnam.

Annex One: Concept Note

CONCEPT NOTE

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON

CONERNS ON THE DON SAHONG DAM

March 20, 2014

Venue: PGCT, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

I. Background

The proposed 260 MW Don Sahong Dam is one of twelve hydropower projects currently being studied and proposed for construction on the lower Mekong River after Xayaburi. It is located 2 kilometres from the Lao-Cambodian border in Champasak Province, Lao PDR. Electricity from Don Sahong dam is planned for export to Thailand. If dam built, it will block the Hou Sahong channel, one of the main channels that comprise the Khone Falls section of the Mekong.

On 23rd March 2006, the Laos government and a Malaysian engineering and investment company, Mega First Corporation Berhad (MFCB), signed a Memorandum of Understanding to investigate the environmental, economic, and technical feasibility of the Don Sahong hydropower project. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultants PEC Konsult Sdn Bhd and Australian Power and Water were commissioned by MFCB to investigate the dam and an EIA draft report was released on 11th July 2007¹. Feasibility studies were also prepared in conjunction with the EIA and completed during October 2007. However, the EIA was not accepted, and a Project Development Agreement was signed with a caveat that the initial EIA should be redone. Then, on 13th February 2008, there was a concession agreement for the dam was signed between Lao PDR and MFCB.

In October 2013, Lao PDR notified the Mekong River Commission (MRC) that the Don Sahong Dam is “not on the Mekong mainstream²” 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”³, 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. This shows that Lao government doesn’t respect the 1995 Mekong Agreement signed by the four lower Mekong countries recognizes the importance of the sustainable use of the shared-river.

¹ PEC & APW., 2007. Don Sahong Hydropower Project Lao PDR. Environmental Impact Assessment, Volume 1, Report, 11th July 2007. Prepared for Mega First Corporation Berhad, by PEC Consult Sdn Bhd (PEC) and Australian Power and Water (APW), Vientiane, Lao PDR.

² 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/>)

³ 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.

To date, there has been no genuine effort to meaningfully consult Cambodian government authorities or affected communities downstream in Cambodia. The cumulative impact assessment admits that “an official public consultation or other meeting to inform concerned authorities about the DSHPP was not carried out⁴.” Given the serious risks that the Don Sahong poses to Cambodia, potentially affected communities, Cambodian authorities and other Cambodian actors must have a say in decisions over the project. Furthermore, given the gaps in the cumulative impact assessment, there is also a need to undertake a comprehensive and participatory transboundary impact assessment. **Moreover**, as the recent study by IFReDI highlights changes in availability of inland fisheries due to the Mainstream Hydropower development is likely to have major negative impacts on food and nutrition security and public health, which in turn decreases the likelihood of Cambodia achieving their Millennium Development Goal commitments⁵. Also, the finding of the research on “Tonle Sap now and in the future” illustrated that hydropower dam development in the Mekong Mainstream are anticipated to be the major environmental, social, and economic impacts to the Tonle Sap System⁶.

For these reasons, The NGO Forum on Cambodia in collaboration with the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) will organize a national workshop on “Concerns on the Don Sahong” to bring together relevant stakeholders including government agencies, development partners, academia, fishery scientists, local and international NGOs, and communities in order to discuss the importance of the Mekong River and the challenges facing to their livelihood from the Don Sahong dam. The main objective of this workshop will be to share information and increase awareness on the Don Sahong dam and its potential impacts to the Mekong and Tonle Sap communities’ livelihoods.

II. Objectives

1. To increase participants’ knowledge on the Don Sahong hydropower dam project in the Mekong countries
2. To share information among government agencies, development partners, NGOs and communities on the proposed Don Sahong hydropower dam and its potential impacts
3. To open floor for participants especially community to discuss about the impacts and concerns of the Don Sahong dam and way forward to overcome those concerns.

III. Expected Output

1. Participants will have increased knowledge on the Don Sahong hydropower dam project in the Mekong countries
2. Participants have gained more information from relevant stakeholders such as government agencies, development partners, NGOs and communities on the proposed Don Sahong hydropower dam and its potential impacts to fishery and livelihood.
3. Communities have chance to understand failing the Don Sahong EIA report and will be able to raise their concerns regarding to Don Sahong hydropower and its impact on their livelihoods and way forward to overcome those concerns;

⁴ National Consulting Company, Vientiane, Lao PDR, January 2013. Environmental and Social Studies: cumulative impact assessment final. Prepared for MFCB.

⁵ IFReDI 2013: Food and nutrition security vulnerability to mainstream hydropower dam development in Cambodia. Synthesis report of the FiA/Danida/WWF/Oxfam project “Food and nutrition security vulnerability to mainstream hydropower development in Cambodia”. Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Fisheries Administration, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. 44 pp. Report prepared by IFReDI, with inputs from R.Johnstone, E. Baran, Chheng P., Tounch B.T, So N. and Nao Thuok.

⁶ 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.

4. Government officials will have a better understanding of the concerns of local communities and will share these concerns with top level decision-makers.

IV. Draft Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenter
7:30-8:00	Registration	NGOF
8:00-8:05	National Anthem	MC
8:05-8:15	Welcome Speech along with the Objectives and Rational of the workshop	Mr. Tek Vannara, NGOF
8:15-8:20	Community remark	Community representative
8:20-8:40	Opening Remarks	H.E. Tea Chhup, Deputy Secretary of state, Minister of MoE
8:40-8:50	Group Photo	
Section I: Current Status of Don Sahong Dam and its potential impacts		
Moderate by: Mr. Youk Senglong, FACT		
8:50-9:15	Introduction and update of Don Sahong Dam	H.E. Te Navuth, Secretary General, CNMC
9:15-9:45	CSOs Perspectives on Don Sahong Hydropower Dam: Report from field visit	Dr. Tek Vannara, ED, NGOF
9:45-10:15	Impact of Don Sahong to the Mekong Dolphin	Gerry Ryan, WWF
10:15-10:30	Coffee break	
10:30-11:00	Q&A	
Section II: The importance of Transboundary EIA study and its quality		
Moderate by: Ms. Im Phallay, NGOF		
11:00-11:25	The importance of conducting Transboundary EIA	Mr. Danh Serey, EIA dept of MoE
11:25-11:45	Analysis report on Don Sahong EIA	Ms. Ame Trandem, IR
11:45-12:00	Q&A	
12:00-13:30	Lunch Break (provided)	
Section III: Group Discussion and way forward on Don Sahong		
Guide Question by Ms. Chea Phallika		
Moderate by: Mr. Chay Keartha & Mr. Mean Chamroeun, Mr. Menghak Vichhay & Ms. Cheng Sreymom, Ms. Luy Rasmey & Mr. Mao Poam, Ms. Thai Soda & Mr. Sun Kimhoeun		
13:30-14:30	2 Main questions: (World Coffee – 4 groups) 3. What are your three main concerns for Don Sahong Dam Project? 4. What are your three measures to address the concerns?	Ms. Chea Phallika, NGOF
14:30-15:30	Way Forward (Panel Discussion) Panel List: 5 mns for each on how to overcome the challenges 1. Government representative 2. Scientific representative 3. NGO representative 4. Communities Representative	Moderator: Mr. Ham Kimkong, RUPP
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break	
16:00-16:30	Joint Statement	Community representatives

Annex Two: Joint Statement

JOINT STATEMENT National Workshop on “Concerns On The Don Sahong Dam” March, 20th, 2014

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

The Don Sahong Hydropower Dam, with an installed capacity of 260 MW, is one of 12 Mekong Mainstream Dams proposed to be built on Lower Mekong Mainstream. Currently, the dam is under study and is expected to commence construction soon. The Dam is located approximately 2km from the border between Cambodia and Lao PDR in Champassak district, Lao-PDR. Electricity from the Don Sahong Dam will be exported to Thailand. If the Dam is built, it will block the water in the Hou Sahong channel which is the largest channel of the Lower Mekong River.

The NGO Forum on Cambodia, in collaboration with the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC), organized a national workshop on “Concerns on the Don Sahong Dam” on 20th March 2014, bringing together relevant stakeholders including government agencies, academia, fishery scientists, local and international NGOs, and communities. Participants discussed the importance of the Mekong River and the challenges faced to their well-being, livelihoods and security due to the Don Sahong Dam.

The primary objective of this workshop was to share information and increase awareness of the Don Sahong Dam and its potential impacts to the Mekong and Tonle Sap communities’ livelihoods. During the workshop, participants raised numerous concerns on the expected impacts of the project, including to livelihoods and food security, loss of natural resources, personal risk and security, health and nutrition. They discussed issues around the poor quality and significant gaps in the project’s impact assessment, including the absence of any trans-boundary assessment of impacts, the lack of community consultation and access to information for affected communities and stakeholders. Participants also provided recommendations for specific actions by governments, the Mekong River Commission, project developers and other stakeholders. Please refer to the attachment for details of these concerns and requested actions.

“If the Don Sahong dam is built, I am worried that there will be no more fish to catch. Then I will not be able to feed my children. I am worried for my family future” Ms. Bou Kam Kong, a community representative from Stung Treng.

“If the dam is built, Lao will lose dolphin forever, and those remaining in Cambodia is will be push closer to oblivion”, Mr. Gerry Ryan, Technical Advisor for WWF- Cambodia

“No dolphin, No tourist and No income!”, Mr. Phloy Vanna, community from Kratie

“We cannot live without fish but we can live without electricity”. Mr. Long Sochet, community fishery

We respectfully request that all issues and concerns raised in our request to The Royal Government of Cambodia, Royal Government of Lao, Royal Government of Vietnam and Royal Government of Thailand will be taken into full consideration during the upcoming Second Summit of the Mekong River Commission being held in Vietnam on 5th April 2014.

- Immediately halt all progress on the Don Sahong Dam until comprehensive and trans-boundary impact assessments have been conducted.
- Require full information transparency and meaningful consultation with communities affected by the project
- Request MRC governments to call for Prior Consultation under the 1995 Mekong Agreement

Contact for more information

1. Mrs Bou Kham Tong, Communities Representative, Tel: 097 981 3154
2. Mr Tek Vannara, CSOs/NGOs Representative, Tel: 012 793 489
3. Mr. Long Sochet, community fishery, Tel: 012 989 318

Annex for the Joint Statement

Communities Concerns

1. Livelihood
 - Lost food sources and reduced income from fisheries
 - Lost income from eco-tourism
 - Lost income from farm activities
 - Difficult to replace lost livelihoods and unclear who will be responsible
2. Health
 - Polluted water which will increase disease susceptibility
 - High content of disease in water
 - Poor water quality, lack of sanitation and access to potable water
 - Malnutrition (lack of fish and therefore lack of available proteins and nutrients)
3. Natural Resources
 - Lost fishery resources
 - Damage and disappearance to Mekong Dolphin habitat
 - Lost Dolphin
 - Decrease in soil fertility and sediment
 - Loss of farmland, crops and animals through flooding and water fluctuations
 - Deforestation, loss of forest resources
 - Loss of fish and animal
 - Loss of biodiversity
 - Erratic water fluctuation
 - Loss of valuable fish species
 - Disruption of fish migration routes
 - Impacts contribute to and exacerbated by climate change
4. Security, Society and Culture
 - Food and health security due to loss of fish Migration
 - Destroy communities solidarity and cultural practices
 - Breakdown of communities, rural-urban migration, loss of education
 - Damage to property due to excessive flooding
 - Potential injury and death caused by dam breakage or erratic discharge of water from reservoir

- Loss of river transportation capacity

Ways Forward

- Make statement to Government (attached with thumb-print of communities)
- Raise awareness on Dan Sahong Dam to communities
- Press Conference on Dam Concern
- Campaign and submit Joint Statement to Prime Minister

Civil Society Representative

Concerns:

- The public consultation and information transparency related to Don Sahong is limited or non-existent and no public consultation
- Affected communities have little or no information about impacts while difficult for them to do advocacy
- Loss of natural resources, eco-system and biodiversity if the dam is developed
- Has transboundary impact
- Severe impacts to fisheries and fish migration
- EIA limited and contains gaps and weaknesses and was conducted but no involvement of stakeholders and especially affected community
- Health impacts and malnutrition due to lack of food security and livelihood impact to 6 million Cambodian people
- Unclear how food security and livelihood losses will be restored
- Communities living near to the river need to resettle in other places
- No resettlement or compensation plan for community who live along and rely on the Mekong
- Change of water flow which may have negative impacts on sedimentation and agriculture
- Pollution, impacts to water quality on Mekong mainstream and down stream
- Damage to RAMSAR site
- Economic losses due to impacts to fisheries, eco-tourism, livelihood replacement
- Government does not show a clear position on addressing community concerns
- How many communities in Cambodia aware about the impact of Xayaburi and Don Sahong to their livelihood?
- How to make Lao Government consider negative impacts to downstream Cambodia

Ways forward:

- Build awareness of community people about negative impact of dams
- Focal community capacity building and networking strengthening
- Share experience of trans-boundary impact
- Government of Cambodia should study, respect concerns of community on dam project
- Finding and consolidate more evident for support advocacy activities
- Advocate with Government of Cambodia on freedom of speech
- Broadcast through radio and TV on dam development and its impact
- Effective approach to link information and advocate to dam supporters

- Find the effective way of disseminating dam concerns to reach to Mekong leaders
- Support for voicing out the people's concerns on the dam and ensuring Government interact with community
- Initiate a campaign to stop dam development and consider renewable and alternative energy generation options

Academic Group Representative

Concerns

- Loss of fish migration
- Loss of fish species
- Loss of dolphins
- Dam will block sediment flow
- Food security and health issues
- Loss of available land for housing
- Changes to water quality
- Impact assessment has many gaps and weaknesses
- No transboundary impact assessment
- No transparency and accountability on benefit sharing
- Impacts to traditional and cultural practices and heritage in the area

Ways forward

- Provide technical skills to local people to increase their agricultural adaptation
- Conduct comprehensive transboundary EIA
- Conduct consultation with every stakeholder