

21 March 2011

Re: Global Call to Cancel the Xayaburi Dam on the Mekong River mainstream in Northern Lao PDR

Your Excellency Thongsing Thammavong, The Prime Minister of Lao PDR,

Your Excellency Abhisit Vejjajiva, The Prime Minister of Thailand,

We, the undersigned 263 NGOs from 51 countries, respectfully call upon the Governments of Lao PDR and Thailand to cancel the Xayaburi Dam proposed for the Mekong River's mainstream in Xayaboury province, Lao PDR. We believe this project to be exceptionally destructive and a threat to development and conservation efforts both within the region and globally. Irreparable damage caused by the Xayaburi Dam to the Mekong River would be a permanent loss to the livelihoods of people of the region and also to one of the most valuable rivers in the world.

The Mekong River is host to the world's largest freshwater fishery, which is central to the food security and livelihoods of millions of people throughout the region. With more than 1,000 species, the Mekong River is also a treasure trove of biodiversity and the second most biodiverse river system in the world.

Located in northern Laos, the proposed 1,260 megawatt Xayaburi Dam is the most advanced of a planned eleven-dam cascade for the Mekong River's lower mainstream. The project's lead developer is the Thai construction company Ch. Karnchang and the project is proposed to be financed by Thailand's Kasikorn Bank, Bangkok Bank, Siam Commercial Bank and Krung Thai Bank. 95% of the project's electricity will be exported to Thailand, while the impacts will be most acutely felt by riverside communities in Lao PDR and neighboring countries. If built, the Xayaburi Dam threatens to cause unprecedented damage to the river's ecology and fisheries by blocking the migratory route of at least 23 fish species and threatening the extinction of 41 more fish species, including the critically endangered Mekong Giant Catfish. This in turn will have devastating impacts to the livelihoods and food security of millions of people living along the river who depend on its natural resources.

We stand in solidarity with the people of the Mekong Region, who have consistently called on the region's governments to cancel the project. The Save the Mekong coalition first submitted a 23,110-signature petition to regional Prime Ministers on 19 October 2009 urging Your Excellencies to keep the Mekong River flowing freely, and to consider better ways to meet the region's electricity needs.¹ Additionally, on 9 September 2010, Thai community groups representing about 24,000 people sent a letter to Your Excellency Abhisit Vejjajiva calling on Thailand to cancel the Xayaburi Dam and plans to purchase electricity from the dam. Furthermore, civil society groups have also stated their opposition to the dam in regional meetings with the Mekong River

¹ For a copy of the petition, see <http://www.savethemekong.org/>

Commission, and through letters to its member governments.² International civil society groups have also sent letters expressing their numerous concerns to their own governments.³

The proposed Xayaburi Dam has also been closely monitored by the international community since it was first proposed in May 2007. International media, including the New York Times, the Guardian, and the Australian Associated Press have reported problems with the project. In addition, the Mekong River Commission's bilateral donors issued a joint statement on 26 January 2011 expressing concern that the full costs associated with mitigating and compensating for the dams' negative impacts to the environment and society have not been properly scrutinized. They further called for additional studies to be done, for public disclosure of the Xayaburi Dam's environmental impact assessment, and to extend the regional decision-making process to provide adequate time for consideration of all available and forthcoming analysis.⁴

A joint decision by the region's governments on whether to proceed with the dam is expected by 22 April 2011, which presents an opportunity to the governments to demonstrate a joint commitment to protect the Mekong River for the shared regional prosperity of present and future generations. More sustainable and peaceful ways exist to meet energy and water needs. We therefore respectfully urge the Government of Lao PDR to immediately cancel plans to build the Xayaburi Dam and for the Government of Thailand to cancel plans to import electricity generated from the Xayaburi Dam.

Yours sincerely:

11.11.11, Belgium

3S Rivers Protection Network, Cambodia

4 Cantos do Mundo, Brazil

Action Aid, India

Adivasi Koordination, Germany

Affected People's Network from Yasothorn-Roiet-Panomprai Dam, Thailand

African Rivera Network, Uganda

AID/WATCH Australia, Australia

Akyaka City Council, Turkey

Angikar Bangladesh Foundation, Bangladesh

Angoeya Community in Kendari, Indonesia

² View the 13 October 2010 Save the Mekong letter to the MRC's CEO at http://www.savethemekong.org/admin_controls/js/tiny_mce/plugins/imagewriter/files/SaveTheMekong_to_MRC_13.10.10.pdf. View the Save the Mekong letter to the MRC's Council on 25 January 2011 at http://www.savethemekong.org/admin_controls/js/tiny_mce/plugins/imagewriter/files/Council.pdf

³ To see a Finnish NGO letter dated on 11 November 2010 to the Finnish Minister for International Trade and Development Cooperation, see:

http://www.savethemekong.org/admin_controls/js/tiny_mce/plugins/imagewriter/files/KEPA.pdf;

To see a letter submitted by Australian NGOs to the Australian Foreign Minister on 20 January 2011, see: http://www.savethemekong.org/admin_controls/js/tiny_mce/plugins/imagewriter/files/Rudd.pdf.

⁴ For the Joint Development Statement, see: <http://www.mrcmekong.org/17thCouncil/Joint-Dev-Partner-Statement.pdf>

Anjuman Asiaye Awam, Pakistan
Anti Pancheshwar-Purnagiri Dam Struggle Committee, Nepal
Arun Concerned Group, Nepal
Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, Thailand
Assembly of the Poor (Rasisalai –Huana), Thailand
Association of Rural Workers Carere (ATCC), Columbia
Asteya Comunicação Natural, Brazil
Bac Giang Union of Science and Technology Association, Vietnam
Bangladesh Krishok Federation, Bangladesh
Bangladesh Environment Network (BPA), Bangladesh
Bank Information Center, USA
BankTrack, Netherlands
Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation, Canada
Berne Declaration, Switzerland
Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal, India
Both ENDS, Netherlands
Brazilian Association of Students of Forestry, Brazil
Bridges Across Borders Cambodia, Cambodia
Bureau for Regional Outreach Campaigns - BROCC, Russia
Burma Rivers Network, Burma
CA Watch Austria, Austria
Cambodian Rural Development Team, Cambodia
Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC), Cambodia
Center for Biodiversity and Development, Vietnam
Center for Community Resource Development Support, Vietnam
Center for Environmental Training and Communication, Vietnam
Center for Responsible Tourism, USA
Center for Water Resources Conservation and Development (WARECOD), Vietnam
Centre for Natural Resources Management & Environment Studies, Vietnam National University (CRES), Vietnam
Centre for Organization Research & Education, India
Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion, Vietnam
Centre for Social Research and Development (CSRDC), Vietnam
Centro de Estudos da Avifauna Ibérica, Portugal
Chiang Khan People's Group, Thailand
Chiang Khong Conservation Group, Thailand
Children's Center for Social and Environment in the Mekong River Basin, Thailand
Chi River Council, Thailand
Cultural and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA), Cambodia
Climate SOS, USA
Coalition for Environment and Development, Finland
COECOCEIBA-Friends of the Earth Costa Rica, Costa Rica
Commission to Protect Indonesian Workers, Indonesia
Community Research and Development Centre, Nigeria
Concern for Dams and Development, India
Coordinadora de Afectados por Grande Embalses y Trasvases (COAGRET), Spain

Corporación Privada para el Desarrollo de Aysén, Chile
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Belgium
Council of Canadians, Canada
CounterCurrent, Germany
Cousteau Society, France
Crescente Fértil, Brazil
Department of Natural Resource and Environment, Vietnam
Development Center for Children and Community Network (DCCN), Thailand
Nature Society / BirdLife Turkey, Turkey
EARTH (Ecological Alert and Recovery-Thailand), Thailand
Earthlife Namibia, Namibia
EcoDoc Africa, South Africa
Ecological and Culture Study Group, Thailand
Ecological Center Dront, Russia
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
Ecomujer, Germany
ECOTERRA - Thailand, Thailand
ECOTERRA International, Germany
Ecotourism Society Pakistan, Pakistan
Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria, Nigeria
EQUATIONS, India
Eurodad - European Network on Debt and Development, Belgium
Eye Environmental Education Center, Russia
Faculty of Environmental Science (FES), Hanoi University of Science (HUS), Vietnam
Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, Ghana
Far Eastern Environmental Health Fund, Russia
Fauna & Flora International Cambodia Programme, Cambodia
Finnish Asiatic Society, Finland
FIVAS – Association for International Water Studies, Norway
FLACSO, Guatemala
Focus on the Global South, India, Philippines, and Thailand
Food and Water Watch, USA
Forum for Indigenous Perspectives, India
Forum LSM Indonesian Court Monitoring, Indonesia
Forum of Farmers Associations of South Kebumen, Indonesia
Forum on Women's and Child's Rights Concerns, Indonesia
Forum on Women's Concerns in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia
Foundation for Legal Aid in Makassar, Indonesia
Friends of the Earth - United States, USA
Friends of the Eel River, USA
Friends of the River, USA
Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia
Glen Canyon Institute, USA
Global Inclusion for HIV/AIDS Protection, Indonesia
Global Witness, UK
Grand Riverkeeper Labrador, Inc, Canada

Grassroots International, USA
Great Baikal Trail-Buryatia, Russia
Green Alternative, Georgia
Green Circle, Czech Republic
Green Watershed, China
Greenpeace Russia, Russia
GRET, Cambodia
Habitat for Humanity Vietnam, Vietnam
Habitat Resource and Training Center, Vietnam
Hanoi University of Pharmacy, Vietnam
Himalayan and Peninsular Hydro-Ecological Network-HYPHEN, Nepal
Ho Chi Minh City Environment Protection Agency (HEPA), Vietnam
Housing and Land Rights Network, Habitat International Coalition, Egypt
Humanitarian Services for Children of Vietnam (HSCV), USA
IDEA, Indonesia
Indonesia Forum for Environment (WALHI), Indonesia
Indonesian Farmer's Union, Indonesia
Indonesian Forum on Environment, Yogyakarta branch, Indonesia
Indonesian National Student's Movements, Indonesia
Indonesian Women's Coalition, Indonesia
infoe (Institute for Ecology and Action Anthropology), Alemania
Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive, Turkey
inNative, USA
In-Pang Network, Thailand
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, USA
Institute for Ecological and Environmental Studies (IUS), Germany
Institute for Environment & Sanitation Studies, Ghana
Institute for Public Policy Research, Indonesia
Institute of Coastal and Offshore Engineering, Vietnam
Institute of Dayakologi, Indonesia
Institute of Local Ombudsmen, Indonesia
Institute of Resources, Environment and Biotechnology, Hue University, Vietnam
Institute of Tropical Biology (ITB), Vietnam
International Accountability Project, USA
International Analog Forestry Network, Costa Rica
International Rivers, USA
International Women and Mining Network, India
Irmas Missionarias Combonianas, Brazil
Irrigation Training and Economics Empowerment Organization (IRTECO), Tanzania
Isan Center for Peace and Human Rights, Thailand
Isan Community Forest Network, Thailand
Isan Environmental and Natural Resource Network, Thailand
Isan Group for Salinity and Mining Monitoring, Thailand
Jano Oddayan Kendra, Bangladesh
JATAM - Mining Network, Indonesia
Jatyo Nadi Raksha Andolon (JNRA) National River Saving Movement, Bangladesh

Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement, Togo
Kabani - the other direction, India
Kam River Basin Network, Thailand
Kehitysyhteistyön palvelukeskus, Finland
Kerala Tourism Watch, India
Khmer Anti-Poverty Party, Cambodia
Khon Hak Nam Khong Group, Thailand
KINABUHI (Central Visayas People's Network for Life and Environment), Philippines
Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc, Philippines
Lahu National Development Organization, Thailand
Landless Workers Movement (MST) Brazil, Brazil
Legal Aid, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Little Tennessee Watershed Association, USA
Living River Siam, Thailand
Makassar, Indonesia
Mangrove Action Project, USA
Manipur Nature Society, India
Manthan Adhyayan Kendra, India
Matilija Coalition, USA
Mekong Basin People's Committee, Thailand
Mekong Basin Sustainable Agriculture Network, Thailand
Mekong Conservation Group, Loei Province, Thailand
Mekong Flooded Forest People's Association, Thailand
Mekong-Lanna Natural Resources and Culture Conservation Network, Thailand
MKS Cambodia, Cambodia
Mountains' Friend Association, Thailand
Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR), Sri Lanka
Movimiento Mexicano de Afectados por las Represas y en Defensa de los Ríos (MAPDER), Mexico
Mun River Conservation Network, Srisaket Province, Thailand
Nabodhara, Bangladesh
Nadi Ghati Morcha, India
National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), Uganda
Friends of the Earth Uganda, Uganda
Nepal Policy Institute-NPI, Nepal
New Star Management Company, Vietnam
New York Climate Action Group, USA
NGO-COD, Thailand
NGO Education Partnership (NEP), Cambodia
NGO Forum of Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Nicaragua Center for Community Action (NICCA), USA
Nong Han Sakon Nakorn Conservation Group, Thailand
Nong Han Kumpawapi River Basin Conservation Group, Udonthanee, Thailand
North East Peoples Alliance, India
Northern River Basins' Network for Ecological Recovery, Thailand
Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondureña, OFRANEH, Honduras

Otros Mundos A.C. Mexico
Otros Mundos Colombia, Colombia
Palang Thai, Thailand
People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature), Vietnam
People and Peace Institution, Thailand
People's Alliance Against Eviction, Indonesia
People's Committee for Recovery of the Mun River, Thailand
People's Organization for Conservation and Recovery of Kaend La Wa, Thailand
Perkumpulan Elang, Indonesia
Philippine Network on Climate Change, Philippines
Plotina.Net, Russia
Polaris Institute, Canada
Ponlok Khmer, Cambodia
Prodefensa del Nazas, A.C. Mexico
PSKK UGM, Indonesia
Public Ecology Centre of Republic Sakha, Russia
Public Environmental Education Network, Russia
Pung River Basin Network, Thailand
Rainforest Action Group for Indigenous Peoples, USA
Rainforest Relief, USA
Rainforest Rescue, Australia
Reforest the Earth UK, UK
RELUFA, Cameroon
Rettet den Regenwald, Germany
Right Livelihood Award Foundation, Germany
River Research Centre, India
Rivers without Boundaries Coalition, Russia, China, Mongolia
Root Force, USA
Rural Communities and Environment Development Organization (RCEDO), Cambodia
Salva la Selva, Spain
Sakonnakorn Civil Society Group, Thailand
SILAKA, Cambodia
Social and Ecological Forum of Eastern Switzerland (SUFO), Switzerland
Society Defense Rights of Consumer Town Yackutsk, Russia
Society for the Living Rights of Animals, Turkey
Solidarity Workshop, Bangladesh
Songkram Basin Conservation and Recovery Association, Thailand
Soropia Community in Kendari, Indonesia
South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers & People, India
Southern - Sub - Institute of Fisheries Planning, Vietnam
Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), Sri Lanka
Sub-district Community Council Network in Six Mekong Provinces, Thailand
Sustainable Travel International, US, Costa Rica, UK, Malaysia, Taiwan, Brazil
SYMBIOSIS – Health and Nature Volunteers, Turkey
Tam Mun River Project, Thailand
Technology for Life, Finland

Tenaganita, Malaysia
Thai Water Partnership, Thailand
The Edmonds Institute, USA
The Faculty of Humanities, Laws and Social Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University, U.K
Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team (tim-team), Thailand
Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA), Thailand
Trust for Conservation of Coastal Resource (TCCR), Pakistan
Tuoi Tre, Vietnam
Turkish Water Assembly, Turkey
Udonntanee Civil Society Group, Thailand
Urban Research Centre, India
Vietnam Forum of Environment Journalist (VFEJ), Vietnam
Vietnam Rivers Network (VRN), Vietnam
Water and Energy Users' Federation-Nepal (WAFED), Nepal
Water Movement, Norway
Wild Life Conservation Society of the Aegean (Ege Doğal Yaşamı Koruma Derneği), Turkey
Women's Group of Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia
Women's Solidarity for Human Rights, Indonesia
World Living Water Systems, Canada
World Rainforest Movement, Uruguay
World Vision, Vietnam
Yayasan Tanah Merdeka (YTM), Indonesia
Yogyakarta Advocacy Institute, Indonesia
Yurt Koyu Dogal Sanatsal Bilimsel Sportif Yasam Dernegi, Turkey

Copy to:

MRC's Council Members

- H.E. Mr. Lim Kean Hor
Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology
Chairman of Cambodia National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Council for Cambodia
- H.E. Mr. Suwit Khunkitti
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment
Chairman of Thai National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Council for Thailand
- H.E. Ms Khempheng Pholsena
Minister to the Prime Minister's Office
Head of Water Resources and Environment Administration (WREA)
Chairperson of Lao National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Council for the Lao PDR
- H.E. Dr Pham Khoi Nguyen
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment
Chairman of Viet Nam National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Council for Viet Nam

Lao PDR Government Officials

- H.E. Mr. Soulivong Dalavong
Minister of Energy
Ministry of Energy and Mines
Vientiane, Lao PDR
- Mrs. Dr. Viengsavanh Doungsavanh
General Director of Environment Department
Water Resource and Environment Administration
Vientiane, Lao PDR
- Mr. Xaypaseuth Phomsoupha
Director General of Energy Promotion and Development
Department of Energy Promotion and Development
Ministry of Energy and Mines
Vientiane, Lao PDR

Thai Government Officials

- Mr. Satit Vongnongteay
Minister to Prime Minister's Office
Bangkok, Thailand

- Mr. Jatuporn Burutpat
Director General
Department of Water Resources
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
Bangkok, Thailand

MRC's Joint Committee Members

- H.E. Mr. Te Navuth
Secretary General of Cambodia National Mekong Committee
Chairperson of the MRC Joint Committee for 2010/2011
Member of the MRC Joint Committee for Cambodia
Cambodia National Mekong Committee
- Mr. Chote Trachu
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
Vice-Chairman of Thai National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Joint Committee for Thailand
Thai National Mekong Committee
- Mme. Monemany Nhoibouakong
Permanent Secretary, Water Resources & Environment Administration
Member of the MRC Joint Committee for Lao PDR
Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat
- Dr. Le Duc Trung
Director General
Member of the MRC Joint Committee for Viet Nam
Viet Nam National Mekong Committee

MRC Secretariat

- Jeremy Bird
Chief Executive Officer
Mekong River Commission

Donor Partners to the MRC

- Asian Development Bank
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- European Commission
- Government of Australia
- Government of Belgium
- Government of Denmark
- Government of Finland
- Government of France
- Government of Germany

- Government of Japan
- Government of the Netherlands
- Government of New Zealand
- Government of Sweden
- Government of United States of America
- World Bank

Other concerned agencies

- Secretary General Ban Ki-moon
United Nations
- Mr. Olivier De Schutter
UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
- Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan
Association of Southeast Asian Networks

Proposed Dam Builders & Financers

- Ch. Karnchang Public Company
- PTT Public Company Limited
- Electricity Generating Public Company Limited
- P.T. Construction & Irrigation Company Limited
- Kasikorn Bank
- Bangkok Bank
- Krung Thai Bank
- Siam Commercial Bank