

**Rivers Coalition of Cambodia**  
**STATEMENT**  
**July 6, 2007**  
**Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

**Cambodia-Vietnam Mekong Committees Exclude Dam-Affected People from Meeting to Review Impacts of Se San Hydro Development**

*Rivers Coalition of Cambodia calls for fair review process*

Phnom Penh – The Cambodian National Mekong Committee and Vietnamese National Mekong Committee met yesterday in Phnom Penh to review an environmental impact assessment of hydropower development on the Se San river, a large Mekong tributary shared by Vietnam and Cambodia.

Several members of the Rivers Coalition of Cambodia were invited but declined to participate because dam affected communities in northeast Cambodia were excluded, and the 187-page assessment was released only one week before the meeting, allowing no time for translation or distribution in Cambodia.

Hydro dam construction on the Se San river, a large Mekong tributary shared by Vietnam and Cambodia, affects tens of thousands of people in northeast Cambodia who depend upon the river for fish and water supply.

The Rivers Coalition of Cambodia regrets that the National Mekong Committees excluded dam affected communities and calls upon the committees and their international donors to organize a proper public consultation in full recognition of the rights of citizens affected by hydropower development, and in accordance with international best practice for public consultation.

The EIA report prepared for Electricity of Vietnam by Nordic hydro consultants, SWECO Groner, and the Norwegian Institute for Water Research comes six years after sudden releases from the first and largest dam on the Se San river drowned more than 30 people and swept away people's boats, fishing gear, and livestock. No compensation or mitigation measures have been provided despite repeated appeals from local communities, government officials, and Phnom Penh-based NGOs.

International best practice requires that EIAs are completed prior to project approval in order to help decision makers, financiers, and the public assess a project's overall viability. In this case, however, the Se San EIA report comes three years after Electricity of Vietnam began building another four Se San dams (Se San 3, Se San 3A, Se San 4, and Pleikrong).

In January of this year, Electricity of Vietnam, the Vietnamese National Mekong Committee, and the Cambodian National Mekong Committee promised to hold a public workshop on the Se San EIA. The Rivers Coalition of Cambodia welcomed this initiative

and appealed to all stakeholders to ensure a fair process so that dam affected communities could participate to their full potential.

In particular, the coalition requested that:

- A copy of the EIA report be made available in Khmer and English at least one month prior to the date of the meeting.
- A Khmer version of the report summary be made available at least one month prior to the date of the meeting, in the event that a complete translation of the report is not ready.
- Professional translation in languages of the participants be provided during the meeting.
- Participation not be restricted and reflects all interests.
- Adequate time be allowed for stakeholders to assess the report and share information and views in the meeting; and
- Ensure that affected community members can fully participate in language and discussions they can understand and respond to.

The RCC regrets that the meeting yesterday did not respect the rights of Cambodian citizens to a fair and meaningful process of consultation about issues that directly affect the lives of thousands of people living along the Se San River.

We nevertheless affirm our collective intention to continue discussion and cooperation with all parties to address the negative impacts of hydro dams along the Sesan, in accordance with national and international laws and agreements.

We remain committed to sustainable development and respect for the rights and dignity of all people.

**For more information please contact RCC members:**

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