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Media Advisory

Save the Mekong Coalition Launch March 14th 2009 in Bangkok

A new coalition to save Southeast Asia's Mekong River will be launched at a special photography exhibition in Bangkok this weekend.

The exhibition by one of Thailand's leading photographers, Suthep Kritsanavarin, is entitled **"Siphandone – Mekong Fishing Under Threat."**

The Siphandone area is located on the Mekong River in southern Laos, nearby to Thailand's Ubon Ratchathani province and Cambodia's Stung Treng province. It is just one area threatened by a series of eleven big hydropower dams proposed for the lower stretches of the mighty river, which is shared by China, Burma, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The *Save the Mekong* coalition was formed in response to growing public concern about the effects big dams would have on the Mekong's migratory fish stocks, regional food security, and the livelihoods of millions of people.

The coalition is open to non-government organizations, community groups, academics, artists and ordinary citizens within the Mekong region and internationally, anyone who shares concerns regarding the future of one of the world's greatest river systems.

Save the Mekong aims to do two things: raise public awareness about the risks associated with damming such an important international river, and persuade policymakers to adopt more sustainable and peaceful ways of meeting people's energy and water needs.

Over the coming months, *Save the Mekong* coalition partners in the Mekong region and internationally will launch a series of activities supporting the coalition's message.

During March and April, *Save the Mekong* will be collecting signed postcards from people in the Mekong countries and around the world, urging the region's political leaders to keep the Mekong flowing freely as a precious source of food, income and life for present and future generations.

People can also sign an online petition at <http://tinyurl.com/Save-the-Mekong>

More information on the coalition and plans to build hydropower dams on the Mekong is available in English, Burmese, Chinese, Khmer, Lao, Thai and Vietnamese on the coalition's web site www.SaveTheMekong.org.

The opening event of the Mekong photography exhibition "Siphandone - Mekong Fishing Under Threat" by Suthep Kritsanavarin will be held on Saturday 14 March at Eden Zone, 3rd floor, Central World Plaza, Bangkok from 1-3pm and is open to the public. A series of talks on the photographs and the importance of the Mekong River will be held at the event. The exhibition is open to the public until 28 March. *The 14 March also marks the International Day of Action for Rivers.*

For more information, CONTACT:

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