

For immediate release

24th November, 2014

**Affected Communities Appeal to the National Assembly:
“Lower Sesan2 Dam Damages Cambodia’s Rich Natural Resources.
Cancel the Project Immediately.”
25th November 2014**



Community representatives will travel on Monday to Phnom Penh to submit the joint statement directly to ask H.E. Samdech Akeak Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of Cambodia for the assembly’s intervention to immediately cancel the LS2 project at 9.00 am on Tuesday 25th November. After the submission, they will hold a press conference at **NGO Forum Office in Phnom Penh at 11:00am** to report to the public how the submission went and respond to the media’s questions and inquiries.

On Sunday, 23rd November 2014, community representatives from 12 villages in Stung Treng and Ratanakiri Provinces in northeastern Cambodia who are affected by the Lower Sesan 2 (LS2) Hydropower Dam Project released a joint statement at a press conference in Banlung, Ratanakiri Province. In the statement, the representatives express concerns over LS2’s huge negative impacts on rich natural resources, especially fish in Cambodia, including the Great Tonle Sap Lake, and the entire Mekong River.

LS2 is already under construction. It is located on the Sesan River in Sesan District, Stung Treng Province, 1.5km downstream from its confluence with the Srepok River and 25km from where the two rivers meet the Mekong River's mainstream. Although technically a tributary dam, LS2 will have significant negative impacts on the fisheries and biodiversity of the Sesan and Srepok Rivers, Tonle Sap Lake and the entire Mekong River. One study predicts that the dam will cause a 9.3% drop in fish stocks basin-wide. This amounts to approximately 200,000 tons of fish per year.

The community representatives also expressed LS2's impacts on their culture, tradition, ancestors' spirits, and identity. **“We belong to the ethnic Pou Nong minority and have been enjoying a life blessed with rich natural resources and cultural traditions. We believe in spirits that live in forests, mountains and rivers in our village. Natural resources are very closely connected to our culture, tradition and daily life. If we lose these sacred places because of LS2, we will lose our culture, tradition and identity. We refuse relocation,”** said Mr. Kim Deung from Kbal Romeas Village, which is located inside the dam's reservoir in Stung Treng.

Most villagers who will face involuntary relocation by LS2 are ethnic minorities such as Pou Nong, Charay, Kring, Prov and Lao. They have their own cultures that have strong connections to natural resources, especially the land that they have lived on since their ancestors' times.

“We have been affected by Yali Falls Dam and other dams upstream in Vietnam for over 10 years. We know how dams change rivers' ecology and affect our life. If dams block rivers' natural flow, fish cannot migrate and multiply. The river water becomes unusable for our daily life activities such as drinking and cooking. We are not considered as affected communities by LS2. But we will also be affected for sure,” said Mrs. Foy Suth from Vernsai village, Vernsai district in Ratanakiri.



According to the statement they point out, **“Fish is Cambodia's heritage. LS2 will damage Cambodia's heritage and is not a good development project”**

All journalists and NGOs are welcome to press conference at 11:00am at NGO Forum Office, in the meeting room at ground floor.

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For more information and media interviews, please contact;

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