



ພັນທະມິດເພື່ອປະຊາທິປະໄຕໃນລາວ

ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY IN LAOS

Alliance pour la Démocratie au Laos

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Statement on the misfortune of the Xe Pian Xe Namnoy hydropower project

With great dismay we have noted the disaster in the southeast of Laos in the province of Attapeu. Our thoughts and prayers are now with the families of the victims. The final number of victims is not yet to be seen. So far, the talk is of more than 6,600 persons concerned with more than 300 dead. During the night of July 23, 2018, the unfinished dam of the US \$ 1.02 billion Xe Pian Xe Namnoy hydropower project collapsed after heavy rains.

The Consortium is composed under a joint partnership company. South Korea's SKE holds 26 percent, South Korea's Korea Western Power or KOWEPO holds 25 percent, Thailand's General Holding Public or Thailand's ratchet 2.5 percent, and the Laotian state-owned company LHSE owns 24 percent of that company.

Already on February 13 2017, the residents have made a video to the public and the ADL and complained about the environmental damage and land grabbing by this project.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtQJTQmoFvI>

At that time, residents have noticed that the dam was planned too high and you would underestimate the accumulating masses of water. Exactly these risks are now confirmed by Ian Baird, Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and seen as the cause of the disaster.
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/collapse-07252018112624.html>

The misfortune was therefore predictable in our view, especially since this is not the first disaster of this kind. Almost three dams have been broken until now. So in 2016 the Se Khaman in the Sekong province, already on 11.09.2017 the Nam Ao dam in the province of Xaysomboun at the Thathom area was broken after heavy rains, on July 22 2018 the Nam Beng dam near the city Pakbeng, province Oudomaxay. More than 4721 victims of these incidents have been counted and more than 125 houses have been destroyed. The Lao government didn't investigate about the mistakes in these cases to prevent for more incidents.

Now many people are afraid to live near the other dams in Laos. Some of the people has left their homes and went precautionary to the hills to save their lives. 5 days after the disaster, the Lao authorities have persecuted foreign reporters to be in Laos. It looks like the truth in Laos should be covered up again.

Again and again, the government of Laos claims to recognize all risks and to have them under control, unfortunately this is reflected this in no way conforms to the facts. Again and

again we have warned as well as well-known environmental protection organizations of the consequences of unbridged dam construction. Despite these warnings and despite the prognosis that the electricity produced by the dams will soon find too few customers and this will lead to a decline in the price of electricity, which in turn will drastically reduce the expected profits from electricity sales, the unbridled construction of dams continued.

We see that dam construction does not improve public finances nor contribute to the development of the country.

We see that, first of all, the power supply of the own population must be secured, before one wants to take over the power supply of the neighboring countries, There are still at least 30% of the population without power supply according to our estimates.

We see that the profits from the construction obviously only benefit some corrupt officials and of course the companies involved in the construction.

We see that the population has little benefit of the dam constructions. They do not even bring jobs, as most dam operators and constructors bring their own workers.

We see that the risks associated with the construction are being ruthlessly passed on to the population, the sad result of this disaster. The government of the Lao PDR has made the useless dam projects without taking any care about the risks of these projects.

We see that, the suffering of the people of Laos by the construction of dams is getting bigger instead of smaller. For a long time now, people have suffered from the forced relocations associated with the construction projects, not to mention endangering the ecosystem.

We see that, the complete reason of all these problems is the dictatorship system in Laos. The people have no right to argue against these projects, no critics are allowed so there is no control in that cases. So also the combat of the corruption is complete ineffective.

The demands of the ADL are therefore not ideologically justified but simply logical:

- 1. We demand the immediate stop of all dam construction projects in Laos.**
- 2. We demand an immediate security review of the existing dams according to international standards and through the assistance of international experts under the supervision of the ASEAN.**
- 3. We demand that all construction projects at the roundtable be composed of a team of experts from environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, security experts from the German TÜV, energy experts from ASEAN and EU states (the latter because of the wealth of experience), a group of ADL and government representatives ensure safe planning of projects.**
- 4. We call for the direct involvement of the citizens of Laos in the control of these projects in order to prevent the associated corruption. But that also means one or more people's decisions on these projects.**
- 5. We require an exact reconnaissance of all circumstances that have led to the accident under the supervision of the UN.**

6. We demand that South Korea's SK Engineering & Construction Company and its partners as well as government agencies pay for the damage.

We the Alliance for Democracy in Laos do not shy away from responsibility, so we offer our turn-around at the roundtable.

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