

# Inclusion of civil society for better water resource governance: Experience from the Mekong



Socheata Sim/ Oxfam



This photo by Pai Deetes

60 million – Mekong River basin  
Largest inland fishery in the world.

Estimate:

- Catch: 2.3 million tones/year
- Value: US\$ 6billion annually (estimated)
- Approx. 800 fish species
- 3<sup>rd</sup> most bio-diverse river system

## The Mekong



- Important blood lifeline of the region: Mekong-Tonle Sap-Delta, annual flood, sediment transport to Delta,
- Migratory route for short & long distance fish species
- Fresh water fishery: main source for diet, protein intakes for the poorest
- Significant to national GDP
- Mekong delta – production of agriculture, rice, vegetable
- River-bank garden



# The Mekong



- Water becomes scarce resource
- Rapid develop – dam construction
- Threat to ecological health – freshwater fishery
- Inclusive voice in decision making of Mekong?



# WHO IS BENEFITING?



Ecological health of the Rivers  
Social/Gendered Impact  
Food Security of river dependent communities  
Widen Inequality gap in the region

### Decision making process:

- Takes into account the voices and aspiration of river dependent communities
- Social and gendered impacts cost by large scale development
- Existing evidence that points to the potential impact on the Mekong:
- Other available alternatives to meet energy needs in the region

Oxfam focus:

- Promoting gender and women's leadership in water resources governance (local-regional)
- Building & strengthening capacity of civil society and river networks to manage water resources and engage in dialogue
- Promoting social and environmental safeguard and standards in large-scale project
- Convening & facilitating a more open, inclusive, accountable dialogue on water governance

***Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to achievement of all SDGs.***



- ✓ **Assessing gender impact;**
- ✓ **Engage women in the community/national/regional dialogue**
- ✓ **Capacity building: gender analysis**
- ✓ **Facilitated enabling space for engagement at policy level**





**Public participation at all levels is critical to achieving sustainable management of water resources. Civil society, women and marginalized citizens need to be included in decision-making processes, and they should be supported with skills and opportunities to participate.**

- Research engage local CSOs, affected community
- Simplify findings – translate – to enable greater access
- Share the findings to CSO networks
- Findings inform policy decision
- i.e: MDS, IFReDI nutrition, IFReDI fish spawning ground
- Support river networks & community articulate the key messages at forums



Roundtable discussion  
MDS findings

SEA Hydropower –  
finding sharing  
Myanmar

CSOs at MRC Int Conf

CSOs-DPs meeting



# Sustainable development of water resources in the Mekong needs to incorporate the communities Rights to resource governance – vital for their lives and livelihood – and their role in managing this resources.



