



Save The Salween Network

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Statement

Yangon, February 22, 2016

Plans to build dams on the Salween River, started by the previous military regime, have recently been accelerated by U Thein Sein's government, which, on February 2, 2016, without informing or consulting Burma's citizens, signed an agreement with China allowing implementation of 18 out of 29 hydropower dam projects planned by Chinese companies in Burma. This is not only going to create misunderstanding between ethnic peoples and the new government, but will also have impacts on ethnic armed groups and the current peace process.

1. Experts have pointed out that climate changes and natural disasters taking place in Burma can be linked to existing dams.
2. According to research along the Salween by earthquake experts, the building of dams will have seismically disruptive impacts on major fault lines, and should definitely not go ahead.
3. The Mong Ton dam, planned on the Salween River in Shan State, will be the largest hydropower project in Southeast Asia, and will threaten the lives, homes and property of countless communities in Shan, Karenni, Karen and Mon States.
4. The current Salween dam projects are not only violating the human rights and indigenous rights of local people, but are violating the civil rights of Burma's citizens.
5. The Salween dam projects are fuelling tension and conflict between different ethnic armed groups. Government troops are also using the pretext of providing security for the dams to expand their presence in ethnic areas. This is threatening the peace process and the lives, homes and property of local ethnic peoples.
6. We do not believe in the process of granting the Environmental Compliance Certificate for the dams, as there has been no transparency and no proper consultation with local people in accordance with EIA/SIA rules and procedures, and local people will gain no benefit from the dams.
7. In accordance with the new government's promise to guarantee ethnic rights and set up a federal democratic system, the Save the Salween Network urges the new government to stop all plans to build dams on the Salween River, as they will have disastrous impacts on the lives of countless ethnic communities in Burma.

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