



## Press statement

### NGOs Congratulate the Cambodian Government to Increase Electricity Generation from Solar Panel up to 20%

The Non-governmental organizations are working on water governance in Cambodia congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia that has recently<sup>1</sup> announced to increase an electricity generation from solar panel up to 20% of national energy mix by 2023 and the confirmation from the government that does not want to see a construction of hydropower dam projects on the Mekong River.

The maximization of electricity from solar panel in short period of time should be applauded and congratulated in the region, while in 2018, a proportion of the national energy mix from solar was less than 1%<sup>2</sup>. Mrs. Courtney Weatherby, Research Analyst of Stimson Center comments that the plan could be possible as the government has recently approved few projects which have a total capacity of more than 100 MW. She said that *“in the accumulation with the existing 10 MW project in Svay Rieng and 80 MW of solar plant in Kampong Speu and a plan to construct a 120 MW in Kampong Chhnang and Pursat which have been approved, I think it is possible”*.

The decision reflects the finding of MRC’s Council Study<sup>3</sup> in 2017 that recommended member countries to maximize renewable energy including from solar in order to reduce dependency on hydropower dam. Meanwhile, it’s also parallel with the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 that the government plans to develop regulation framework on renewable energy that will also contribute to the commitment of the government to 2030 Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to climate change mitigation by 16% for the energy industry. On the other hand, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023<sup>4</sup> also clearly mentioned about sustainable development of the Mekong basin and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 6 “ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AND SANITATION FOR ALL.”

Executive Director of the NGO Forum on Cambodia and a representative of NGOs working on water governance, Dr. Tek Vannara expresses his congratulation to the RGC that has put in place a specific framework to maximize energy from solar panel and particularly its confirmation that the RGC does not want to see hydropower projects to be built on the Mekong River. He added that *“I think this plan will respond to a recommendation of MRC’s Council Study that member countries should consider other new technology energy sources including from solar and wind energy that has potential capacity in the region in order to reduce dependency on hydropower.”*

Countries in the Mekong region including Cambodia had suffered from El Nino phenomenon in early of 2019 that caused the country to face a significant shortage of electricity and daily blackout in a recent dry season. The shortage is seen that because of the government has extremely relied on electricity generated from hydropower which is run by hydrology from upstream, tributaries and regular monsoon season rain. The government should take this lesson learnt into consideration and should find other alternative options

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/govt-reduce-reliance-hydro>

<sup>2</sup> EAC Consolidation report 2018

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mrcmekong.org/assets/Publications/Council-Study/Council-study-Reports-discipline/Council-Study-BioRA-Final-Technical-Report-VOLUME-4-Development-Scenarios-FINAL-REPORT-DEC-2017.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Cambodia National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023, page 336-337



that will generate less impacts on social and environmental in order to reduce dependency on hydropower.

**For further information, please contact:**

Mr. Hok Menghoin, Environment and Agriculture Program Manager of the NGO Forum on Cambodia

Mobil: (855) 12 505 560

Email: [menghoin@ngoforum.org.kh](mailto:menghoin@ngoforum.org.kh)