

**The 6<sup>th</sup> MRC Regional Stakeholder Forum**  
***The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Stakeholder Information Sharing on the Prior***  
***Consultation Process for the Proposed Pak Lay Hydropower Project***  
***17<sup>th</sup> January 2019***  
***Luang Prabang, Lao PDR***

**Closing Speech**  
by  
**Dr. An Pich Hatda**  
In-coming Chief Executive Officer  
Mekong River Commission Secretariat

Good afternoon!

***Distinguished Participants,***  
***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Our 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Stakeholder Forum on the proposed Pak Lay Hydropower Project is now ending. Before we depart, I would like to leave some words.

Of course, it's been a long day; it's been an intensive day. But it's also been a productive, and a stimulating day.

I'd like to thank you all for your active participation and contribution. I also thank those who have been following us on Facebook via the livestream. Thank you for your interest in the forum, in particular in the prior consultation process in general.

Over the course of the day, I've been particularly encouraged by the number and diversity of our stakeholders with representatives from the civil society, governmental and non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector, and development partners, who made up about 120 in total.

We had a very good chance to review and discuss various aspects in the second draft Technical Review Report. These include hydrology, hydraulics, sediment, dam safety, navigation, water quality, fisheries and socio-economic issues.

We had received extensive and constructive feedback from you, which will be taken into account when making the final draft Technical Review Report. Your suggestions in this report form an integral part of the prior consultation process. The revised report will be submitted to the member countries for their consideration and for discussing and drafting a Joint Statement and a Joint Action Plan in the future.

Here, I wish to stress the importance of post-prior consultation process, which is the on-going interaction between the proposing country and the notified countries and the changes to be made, beyond the official six-month prior consultation process.

Ladies and gentlemen, one particular thing I wish to highlight is how the prior consultation process has transformed itself so far. The Pak Lay prior consultation process has seen a greater interaction from the proposing country and the developer. Lao PDR has responded quickly and attentively to comments from the first forum and the request for additional information contained in first draft Technical Review Report. The developer has also promptly responded though Lao PDR by submitting additional documents to the MRC Secretariat for our review and stakeholders' discussion.

For this, I wish to thank the Lao Government for being open to sharing information and receiving feedback.

On the part of the MRC Secretariat, we are committed to supporting the member countries to ensure that the prior consultation process for Pak Lay complete successfully. The Secretariat will provide our sound technical review report and facilitate discussion on the project, to make sure that at the end of the prior consultation process, a Statement is borne out, and that a Joint Action Plan is developed right after the conclusion of the six-month prior consultation process in order to implement the Statement.

However, I wish to stress that before the Statement and Joint Action Plan for Pak Lay are out, it is highly fundamental for the Joint Action Plan for the Pak Beng to be approved and released in order to demonstrate clear commitment to implement the Statement by all parties. This is what our stakeholders and development partners are looking forward to seeing it.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Let me stop here. But before that, I wish to sincerely thank some special people who made this event possible. These are our MRC Secretariat administrative staff and technical specialists. Please come forward, and please give them a big applaud for the services they have provided to us

Thank you very much and have a pleasant stay in Luang Prabang.