

How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods

There is a construction of China's "Belt and Road" dam that collaborates between China and other countries; one of them is Cambodia which affects people, the environment, and also the economy. Most majority of citizens are harmed by this construction, for instance, badly ecosystem makes their livelihood dissatisfied because of the decrease in revenue and food.

Why does the government need to do this construction although it harms many things? The government thinks about the future that if the dam is successful, it will make lots of advantages to the economy in the country, for example, improve the infrastructure of the country, connect with the international market to generate cash flow in the country and it is the opportunity in term of international relations with China and other countries as well. On the other hand, the government does not care much about the people who are living around there and the negative impact on the environment and society.

People who are live around the construction area are affected by the government and authorities who are deciding to construct the dam. Flooding that destroyed livelihood and agriculture: loss of a large amount of income since food and revenue come from fish, rice, vegetables, fruits, and forest products, especially they lose their occupation. By constructing the dam, makes whole species died and fishery yields have dramatically decreased. Before this construction, they can fish to consume and sell the rest to generate revenue to use in their family, they can also sell crops, vegetables, and fruits as well because the land is fertile. In particular, the relationship between people who live there has a good relationship together and also their ancestors lived and are buried.

The perspective of people and government do not match and have different opinions, so it causes many problems that I mentioned earlier. So, the government solves these problems by paying the compensation to the households, but people do not accept the compensation at all. Since the government let people choose either US\$6,000 to build their new house or pre-built home but the thing is the resettlement area is far away from their old house which means they cannot fish, poor quality of pre-built home, located in area that less fertile and difficult to plant and only about US\$6,000 does not sufficient to build the new home. As you can see that the compensation that the government offered does not match the value that they lost and the negative impacts on environment. In term of economics as well, if we compare the benefit that the country gets from this construction with the cost that we have to trade off, whether it is worth or not.

In conclusion, the social cost that we have to trade off, makes the government rethinking carefully about this situation and take it seriously. For example, offer the appropriate compensation, create training programs to encourage people to practice new skills, support people to do the new occupation, explore alternative energy and subsidize the environment that is destroyed by the construction.