

“How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods”

Because the dam which was constructed in Cambodia's Mekong River Basin is a part of the Chinese government's large-scale investment and infrastructure project “Belt and Road Initiative”, many controversies occurred.

From my point of view, the Cambodian government intervention is one of the causes that make the local communities and the aquatic animals along the Mekong river lose their sources of food, income, and livelihood. As the government supports the project and is responsible for building the dam, people are forced to leave their homes and are neglected. This leads to the increase in poverty, higher unemployment rate, and the decline in native fish species even though the compensation was made it is still not enough for people to support their cost of living as much as they used to earn.

Furthermore, it is clearly stated in the article that the country's geography is not suited for hydroelectric power and this hydroelectric dam can create carbon footprints equal to those from fossil fuel plants. In order to successfully build it, the requirements are to get as much land as possible due to this geography weakness. The opportunity cost of building this dam would be the disappearance of a large amount of vegetation land which later can lead to long-term environmental problems and causes a great effect on many stakeholders. For example, the dead vegetation from the used land can emit large amounts of carbon dioxide and methane which are basically the main source of releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere known as global warming.