

PEOPLE'S DECLARATION AGAINST LARGE DAMS

Water is a vital element of life. It has provided people with nourishment, livelihood and a means to sustain existence.

During the second half of the past century, we have seen the Philippine government arbitrarily use our river systems in its plan for energy development. Dams were built across the nation to facilitate development, but development was defined from the perspective of foreign investors, dam builders, international funding agencies, and the government. Since then up to now, the Philippine government has shown its subservience to foreign monopoly capitalists in its policies towards liberalization, deregulation and privatization.

For this, Filipino masses especially the peasants and the indigenous peoples, were damned to pay a dear price. Thousands of Filipino families were physically and economically displaced. Homes and properties were destroyed and uncompensated for. Communities lost their heritage and their cultural identity. Ecosystems were destroyed. Harassment, militarization and human rights violations became a common experience for communities directly affected by government development projects.

From the laying of the dam cornerstones to the turning of the dam turbines, profits flowed into the pockets of foreign energy corporations, their local partners, international funding agencies and the bureaucracy. Meanwhile, the flow of silt into the farmers' productive fields, the destruction of ecosystems, the people's painful experiences of relocation and resettlement, broken government promises on compensation, and the non-delivery of social services to communities have made survival even more difficult for the already marginalized sectors of society. The needs of the people were drowned by the corporations' greed for profit.

This experience is not solely that of the Filipino people. According to the World Commission on Dams report, large dams that were built in different countries around the world have failed to produce as much electricity, provide as much water and controls as much flood damages as their sponsors claim. Other people, especially from the Third World, share our experiences with dams. The

state of our lives has made it clear that large dams are not development effective and have not addressed the need to sustain life and facilitate development.

The people should be in control of their resources. Energy development programs should be attuned to the need for nationalist industrialization and genuine agricultural development. There are alternatives to large dams that are more economically viable and have less social and environmental costs. Recommendations and feasible options presented by local groups and the World Commission on Dams have to be seriously considered by those in government, by dam builders and by funding agencies.

It is for these reasons that we, the participants of this national workshop on dams, call for:

A stop to all ongoing dam construction in the country,

A moratorium on the construction of new dams,

Full compensation and provision of sustainable livelihood to communities affected by existing dams, including the communities affected upstream and downstream,

The immediate rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems around the area of existing dams.

We further call on the government headed by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, on dam builders and agencies that fund the construction of dams to:

Respect and uphold the rights of dam-affected peasants and indigenous peoples,

Seek and develop efficient, equitable and sustainable options for water and energy development,

Fully compensate victims of existing and ongoing dam projects whether operational or not, and

Scrap globalization as the thrust of the Philippine economic program.

We call on the candidates of the upcoming election:

To support the demands of the people to stop the construction of large dams and to seek alternative energy sources,

To uphold basic rights of the affected communities, and

To promote national industrialization and genuine agricultural development.

On this 25th day of March 2001, we the participants of the national Workshop on Dams,

Unite in our common struggle against large dams,

Commit ourselves to establish a network of dam-affected communities and advocate groups for the protection of our rights, of the environment and for pro-people development, and

Sign this declaration at Hotel Salome, Loakan Rd. Baguio City, Philippines.

Signatories:

Alyansa sa Maguuma Para sa Serbisyo sa Cayapas Dam
Babilonia Wilner Foundation-Balik Kalikasan
Bigkis at Lakas ng Katutubo sa Timog Katagalugan (BALATIK)
Bu-ot Farmers and Land Owners Organization (BUFALO)
Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera, Inc. (CDPC)
Center for Environmental Concerns – Philippines
Cordillera People's Alliance – North Benguet (CPA-NB)
Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center (CWERC)
Farmers Development Center
HALAD – West
IBON Foundation, Inc.
Ifugao Resource Development Center (IRDC)
Innabuyog
International Rivers Network (IRN)
Itogon Inter-Barangay Alliance (IIBA)
Kalikasan – Peoples Network for the Environment
Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP)
Legal Right and Natural Resources Center – Cagayan de Oro
Makabayang Samahan ng Dumagat - Rizal (MASKADA – Rizal)
Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary
Mother Earth Unlimited
Nagkahi-usang Lumolopya nga Apektado sa Bayongan Dam (NAGLABAD)
Nasavaka'n Tarigunay't Bukidnon do'r Kalindaan (NATABIK)
Peasant Leaders Forum (PLF)
Peoples Upland and Development Network and Outreach (PUDNO)
Public Education and Awareness Campaign for the Environment (MIRRIAM Peace)
Regional Development Center – Cagayan Valley (RDC – Cagayan Valley)
Samahan ng Magtataguyod ng Agham at Teknolohiya Para sa Sambayanan (AGHAM)
Saniblakas ng Inanag Kalikasan (SALIKA)
Sibol ng Agham at Teknolohiya (SIBAT)
Solidarity and People's Advocacy Network (SPAN)
Task Force Tumanduk
Tignay Dagiti Mannalon a Mangwayawaya ti Agno (TIMMAWA)
Tunay na Alyansa ng Bayan Alay sa Katutubo (TABAK)
U.P. Lakay Kalikasan Mountaineers