

Statement by people of Kunhing township

June 26, 2015

Kunhing people denounce “gifts” given to promote the Upper Salween (Mong Ton) Hydropower Project

It has been reported that the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) gave gifts to villagers in Mong Ton in May 2015 when carrying out the EIA/SIA for the Mong Ton Hydropower Project, and that SMEC gave a public response on June 18, 2015, denying giving any gifts.

We therefore want to provide information about how gifts have been given in Kunhing to promote the Mong Ton dam project.

On April 27, 2015, the Union Solidarity and Development Party called a meeting of their members and other community leaders from the town and surrounding villages, to meet the Shan State Minister of Industry and Electricity, U Sai Tun Yi, who was visiting Kunhing. About 300 people attended the meeting at the Nam Pang hall.

After the meeting, as participants left the hall, they were each given a bag, on which was written “Upper Thanlwin Mong Ton Hydropower Project” in Burmese and English, with a large logo of the project in the middle. At the top of the bag were smaller logos of each of the five companies involved in the dam: China Three Gorges Corporation, China Southern Power Grid, Sinohydro, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (International) and Myanmar’s International Group of Entrepreneurs Company.

Inside each bag were a traditional Shan woman’s outfit (with blouse and sarong), a jar of balm, a bottle of traditional Shan herbal medicine, a packet of vitamin pills, and a packet of painkillers.

Some people who received the gifts did not immediately read the writing on the bag, which was anyway not in Shan. They only realized when they got home that the gifts were to promote the Mong Ton dam, and were upset because they did not support the dam. Some even wanted to return the gifts.

The gifts were given only three days before SMEC’s planned public meeting in Kunhing about the Mong Ton dam, and were obviously intended to influence people to support the project. In other words, the gifts were a form of bribery.

This was one of the reasons why local people were very angry at the dam investors, and why we wrote in our public statement on April 30, 2015: “Kunhing people will strongly oppose any action to promote implementation of the Mong Ton hydropower project by the government, Ministries, investing companies and organizations, including holding public meetings and campaigning, paying money or bribing, either directly or indirectly.”

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Logo of (5) companies on the gift's bag



Things are inside the gift's bag

Take gift's bag back and stop all step of Mong Ton dam on Salween river

