



**DRAFT**

**Climate Change, Gender, and the Mekong:  
A Community Dialogue**

Date: Thursday, November 21, 2024

8:30am to 4:30pm

Venue: Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

## **Introduction and Overview**

The phenomenon of climate change is one of the Greater Mekong Subregion's most pressing concerns. Nowhere is this more evident than in the poorest and most vulnerable communities. The Mekong River plays a critical role in supporting the livelihoods, nutrition, and well-being of millions of people. Climate change is having a profound effect on this river system, especially for rural communities in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

The Mekong River itself has long been a lifeline for millions of people in Southeast Asia, providing water for irrigation, fishing, and daily use. However, the region is particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, including unpredictable rainfall patterns, flooding, prolonged dry spells, and increasing water shortages. For rural communities, whose livelihoods are often directly tied to the river and surrounding ecosystems, the effects are devastating. In Cambodia, the Tonle Sap Lake and its surrounding areas have seen reduced water levels, severely impacting rice farming and fisheries—two key sources of income and food.

The effects of climate change in Cambodia, and the broader Mekong River Basin, extend beyond environmental impacts to socio-economic and ecological sustainability. The consequences can be seen across all sectors of society: agriculture, industry, public health, and water resources. For many years, rural populations have struggled to adapt to these changes, but with rising temperatures, the challenge has become even more urgent. Women, in particular, bear a disproportionate share of the burden. In these rural communities, women are often responsible for water collection, food production, and maintaining the well-being of their families. As water becomes scarcer and crops fail, their workload increases dramatically. Moreover, the physical and emotional toll of climate change-related displacement and poverty affects women more acutely.

In the Greater Mekong Subregion, climate change has intensified gender inequalities. Women, especially in poor rural areas, have less access to education, economic opportunities, and decision-making roles, making it harder for them to adapt to these challenges. Climate change, therefore, not only threatens the environment but also perpetuates and exacerbates existing social and gender inequalities.

The aim of this dialogue event is to bring together key stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society organizations, women's rights activists, and development experts, to explore practical strategies for mitigating the impacts of climate change. The dialogue will focus particularly on how these impacts are experienced by women in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, and how local and international cooperation can help alleviate these challenges. This event is designed to facilitate a constructive exchange of ideas on how best to minimize the long-term effects of climate change on vulnerable communities. It will also look at ways to empower women as leaders in environmental sustainability, as they are uniquely positioned to advocate for and implement solutions at the community level.

By engaging in this dialogue, participants will have the opportunity to:

- Understand the direct impact of climate change on women's livelihoods, health, and social standing in rural communities.
- Explore gender-sensitive solutions to climate adaptation and resilience.
- Identify opportunities for transnational cooperation that can support climate change adaptation efforts across the Mekong region.
- Promote the role of women in leadership positions related to environmental protection and sustainability, recognizing their crucial role in building resilient communities.

This event seeks to generate a shared commitment to addressing climate change through a gender-focused lens and to facilitate collaborative action that empowers women and promote sustainable development in the region. The insights gained from this event will contribute to the broader discourse on how we can build more equitable, inclusive, and resilient societies in the face of climate change.

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Thursday, November 21, 2024, Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh

Emcee: Ms. Kong Sreyrath, Project Coordinator, CICP

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|---------------|---|
| 8:00-8:30am   | Registration  |
| 8:30-8:40am   | Opening - Welcome<br><br><b>H.E. Mr. Huy Kanthoul Vora</b> , Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) <b>(confirmed)</b>  |
| 8:40-8:50am   | <b>Ms. Meloney Lindberg</b> , Country Director, The Asia Foundation, Phnom Penh <b>(confirmed)</b>  |
| 8:50-9:30am   | Keynote Address<br><br><b>H.E. Ms. Sivann Botum</b> , Secretary of State, Minister of Women’s Affairs, Royal Government of Cambodia. <b>(confirmed)</b>   |
| 9:30-9:40am   | Group Photo   |
| 9:40-10:00am  | Coffee/Tea Break  |
| 10:00-11:15am | <b>Panel One:</b><br><br><b>Gender and Development Issues along the Mekong River</b><br><br>This panel examines the relevance of climate change and its impacts, in the context of gender, along the Mekong from Southern Laos to Lower Vietnam.<br><br>Moderator: <b>H.E. Ms. Pok Marina</b> , Member of the Board of Director, CICP <b>(confirmed)</b><br><br>Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dr. Alice Beban</b>,<br/>Programme Coordinator, Sociology Programme,<br/>Massey University, New Zealand <b>(confirmed)</b></li><li>• <b>Ms. Panhaka Nou</b>,<br/>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Manager<br/>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit<br/>Greater Mekong Community Affairs Department (GMCA)<br/>Mekong Institute, <b>(confirmed)</b></li></ul> |

- **Dr. ANG Raksmeay**  
Research Fellow  
Centre for Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE)  
Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)  
**(confirmed)**

Question and Answer

11:15am-12:00pm

Launching Ceremony of the 7th Edition of the Journal of Greater Mekong Studies (JGMS)

12:00–1:00

Lunch

1: 00 – 2:15

**Panel Two:**

**Transnational Cooperation on Gender Issues**

This panel brings together experts representing national perspectives from both inside and outside the region on gender issues in the subregion and how to build deeper collaboration around the topic.

Moderator: **Sarah Rose Jensen, (AUPP) (TBC)**

- **Andrea Pavlick, PhD,**  
Environment Team Lead, USAID/Cambodia, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**(confirmed)**
- **Virgемarie A. Salazar, Ph.D**  
Assistant Professor  
University of the Philippines Diliman **(TBC)**
- **Dr. Vu Minh Hoang,**  
Faculty Member in History and Vietnam Studies, and Ms. **Nguyen Thi Ngoc Lan,** Postdoctoral Fellow in Environmental Sustainability, Full bright University of Vietnam **(confirmed)**

Question and Answer

2:15-2:30pm

Coffee/Tea Break

2:30 - 4:00pm

**Panel Three:**

**Building the Next Generation of Women Leaders in the Area of Environmental Protection and Sustainability.**

This panel examines next steps in developing women leaders engaged with climate-related issues in general and gender and climate in particular.

Moderator: **H.E. Dr. Chap Sotharith**, Member of the Board of Director, CICP **(confirmed)**

- Representative from Ministry of Women’s Affair **(TBC)**
- **Ms. San Sophany**,  
President, SheThinks Network. **(confirmed)**
- **Ms. Say Puthy**,  
Project Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace **(confirmed)**

Question and Answer

4:00-4:15pm

Conclusion and Way Forward, Summary of Insights

4:15 - 4:30pm

Closing Remarks by **Mr Andreas Zurbrugg** -

Head of Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy **(confirmed)**

4:30pm

End of Program