



20.2.2006

Ilisu dam project:

Statement on the Updated Environmental Impact Assessment Study (UEIA) and the new Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)

On 21/11/2005 the consortium planning to build the highly controversial Ilisu dam in the southeast of Turkey has published a new Environmental Impact Assessment Study as well as a new Resettlement Action Plan.

The NGOs WEED (World Economy, Ecology and Development) from Germany, Berne Declaration from Switzerland and ECA Watch Austria have analyzed the new reports thoroughly and they come to a devastating conclusion:

None of the points of critique which have been stated in the past have been dispelled by the studies.¹

The project still shows massive failings and deficiencies in relation to the project planning and the project design.

If the dam project will be realized, there will be devastating impacts for humans, for the environment and for the security and stability in the region.

As the design of the dam project has not been changed, the hydrological impacts have largely remained the same. Although the consortium claims in a press release from November 2005 that the Turkish Government has guaranteed higher minimum flow

¹ This statement is mainly based on the following studies:

- An update of the hydrological report by Phil Williams & Associates (PWA) of 2001;
- a report from the Swiss EAWAG (Wasserforschungsinstitut der Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule) by Dr. C. Teodoru about the hydrology and the water quality;
- a statement from WEED, ECA-Watch Austria and Berne Declaration on the Resettlement Plans;
- an assessment of the human rights situation in the kurdish areas in Southeast Turkey by Kurdish Human Rights Project)

levels for the neighboring countries, the actual flow levels mentioned in the UEIAR are the same as indicated in the report 5 years before. As Phil Williams & Associates (PWA) observes, on the one hand the Ilisu dam is presented as a purely hydroelectric power station, but on the other hand it is described as an integral part of the irrigation project Cizre. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the overall project is still lacking. Furthermore there is a danger that in dry summer months hardly any water will reach the neighbouring states. Sedimentation, eutrophication and the increase of malaria constitute major unresolved problems for the life span of the dam, the water quality and the health of the residents.

Important technical studies as well as baseline data still do not exist. The EAWAG study (Water Research Institute of the Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule) mentions inter alia fish-die-off and massive damages for the agriculture in Iraq as impacts of the Ilisu dam. Although it has been indicated since 2001 that the hydrological changes also have an impact on the downstream riparian states, transboundary effects are not examined in the UEIAR.

Further, the resettlement plans are still completely inadequate. They are in no way sufficient to dispel the criticisms against the project. Important baseline data were not taken into account, a large part of the affected groups were not considered and the conducted enquiries show major deficits. There is neither a comprehensive resettlement budget nor special programmes for income restorations for the resettled persons. Host areas for resettlement are mentioned, but their adequacy and the chances for realization are not sufficiently examined. If the project wants to avoid that a major part of the affected persons will face immense poverty, a new RAP has to be designed altogether. This plan must design realistic measures for all affected people to restore their income and calculate and provide the necessary budget for these.

Also in terms of security serious problems continue to exist. Time and again there are cases of death among the civilian population in connection with military actions. Torture and abuse by the police and the security forces are still common. This context and its relevance for a large project like the Ilisu dam is utterly neglected.

The planned measures for the rescue of cultural assets were designed without participation of the people living in the region. They are both technically and in terms of the time schedule unrealistic. As there are still mines buried in the area, severe security risks for the excavation workers exist. Moreover, the military has decided to shut off various potential excavation sites due to security reasons.

The analysis of alternatives is incomplete, unsystematic and biased. Ecological aspects are examined only selectively and social impacts are not analyzed at all. The chapter dealing with the minimization of resettlement in relation to different alternatives does not refer to the issue of resettlement at all. Therefore the analysis of alternatives violates in 36 points the Annex II of the OECD Common Approaches, the requirements of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Operational Policy OP 4.01 as well as other

international standards, particularly the ones set up by the World Commission on Dams (WCD).

Under the given circumstances we regard the approval of an export credit guarantee as completely unthinkable. If the Export Credit Agencies (ECA) accepted the presented EIA and the RAP they would lose all credibility regarding environmental concerns.

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The following documents will be published soon:

- A statement by WEED, ECA- Watch Austria and Berne Declaration on the Environmental Impact Assessment Report;
- A report on the Resettlement Plans by World Bank expert Dr. Michael Cernea;
- A statement on the planned archeological rescue plans;
- An assessment of the studies on alternatives in the EIA;
- An analysis on the extent to which the WCD guidelines are fulfilled.