

15th April, 2004

**Re: China's decision to reconsider the building of dams in Nujiang River**

Dear Premier Wen Jia-bao,

On behalf of Greenpeace, I would like to express my gratitude to you for your decision to suspend plans for controversial dam projects in the Nujiang River. Your unprecedented decision marks a new era of development, which takes the environmental and social costs into consideration. Your serious effort in protecting the world's fragile environment not only gives relief to environmentalists, but also to people around the world and their future generations. They will surely remember your thoughtful decision.

Many environmentalists and people in downstream countries have been concerned with the 13-dam cascade development plan in Nujiang. It is believed that the dams might irreversibly affect one of the world's foremost hotspots of biodiversity, drastically changing the landscape, and posing a serious threat to living species in the river and Gaoligongshan Mountain, which was listed as one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites in July 2003. In addition, one of the dam projects might also threaten the wild rice species originating in Baoshan Prefecture, thus threatening the biodiversity of rice which is essential in promoting food security in China.

Citizens of downstream countries, namely Burma and Thailand, have also expressed their deep concern about abrupt changes in river run-off of the Salween River, the downstream section of Nujiang in Burma, which will seriously affect the fish habitats and their breeding ground, the agriculture and fisheries practice of riparian residents, and the water quality of the river.

Greenpeace acknowledges your wise decision on suspending the Nujiang Dams as consistent with the Chinese Government's recent thinking on the "New Development Model," the promotion of Green GDP and emphasis on "balanced and concerted development." We believe that this will enable the world to rethink the imbalanced development model of placing economic development before social and environmental concerns.

Greenpeace is concerned that the waves of large dam construction in western China would constitute an unprecedented threat to the fragile biological and geological environment in this previously underdeveloped region, if thorough environmental and social impact assessments have not been properly conducted. While we fully agree with the need to increase the living standards of people in western China, we believe that there are more integrated approaches of development, which would benefit local communities as well as the environment.

Greenpeace share your difficulty in rapidly developing installed capacity to meet the increasing energy demand in China. We have been advocating the massive development of renewable energy around the world in order to power the future and combat global climate change. China has huge potential to develop modern, sustainable, clean and efficient renewable energy like wind. Greenpeace is willing to offer our expertise to help China to develop into the world leader in the harnessing of clean energy.

On behalf of Greenpeace, I wish you every success in bringing China a greener and more sustainable future with your outstanding leadership.

Yours respectfully,

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Dr. Gerd Leipold  
Executive Director, Greenpeace International