



***An Uncertain Future: Working Towards a Thriving Tonle Sap***  
*Part of the Mekong Virtual Symposium Series*

**DATE/TIME:** November 19, 2020 9:00-10:30 AM ICT / November 18, 2020 9:00-10:30 PM EST

**Duration:** 90 minutes

**Platform:** RSVP <https://www.mekongwater.org/mekong-virtual-symposium>

**Interpretation:** Yes, to Khmer

**Agenda:**

*8 am ICT - 9 am ICT (8 pm-9 pm EST)*

Virtual Networking Hour

*9 am - 10:30 am ICT (9 pm-10:30 pm EST)*

Panel discussion with Ms. Chea Sila, Dr. Jenna Jambeck, Dr. Zeb Hogan and other panelists.

*10:30 am - 11:30 am ICT (10:30 pm-11:30pm EST)*

Expert-led breakout discussions on topics such as fisheries, plastic waste and youth engagement.

**Background:** The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Bureau of Global Public Affairs, Embassy Phnom Penh, Embassy Bangkok, and the Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership by Pact Thailand are pleased to announce the second Mekong Virtual Symposium. As part of the U.S. Vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, the U.S. government is committed to providing a platform that encourages information sharing, dialogue, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement for cooperative, responsible management of the

Mekong River. The U.S. engagement in the Mekong region has long emphasized transparent, open cooperation for sustainable management of the river. The U.S. recently affirmed and elevated this commitment with the launch of the [Mekong – U.S. Partnership](#). This engagement builds trust among partners and stakeholders and strengthens cooperation not only on water issues but also for natural resources management more broadly.

This program will engage key stakeholders on the range of issues facing the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia: fishing and fish migration, plastics, floods and droughts, sediment, and dam impacts. The Mekong River is home to one of the most biodiverse river ecosystems in the world with over 1,100 species of fish. The Tonle Sap Lake – the world’s most productive inland fishery – is a unique and critical part of this complex system. During the annual monsoon season, the lake swells in size and experiences a flow reversal, where instead of water flowing from the lake to the Mekong, water goes from the Mekong into the lake. This phenomenon is fundamental to maintaining fish passage and sediment flows, and ultimately, the thriving ecosystems and livelihoods reliant on the Tonle Sap. As the Mekong’s flow reversal happens later and later each year, the Tonle Sap now faces an uncertain future.

This program on key issues in the Tonle Sap Lake builds upon existing efforts in the Mekong region to strengthen collaboration and dialogue on water issues and solutions, and supports the Mekong Water Data Initiative (MWDI). The MWDI aims to strengthen the capacity of Lower Mekong countries to collect, analyze, and manage water and water-related data in order to reduce water-related risks and promote sustainable economic development across the water, food, energy, and environment nexus.

Mekong experts identify strategies and methods to foster longer-term information sharing, collaboration, and expert consultation. This program benefits regional mid-level water, rural and urban development, energy, environment, and health ministry officials, water resource managers and utility operators, academics, and civil society in the Lower Mekong region. Join us before the program for a networking virtual happy hour; immediately following the program, participants will have the opportunity to join expert-led discussion breakout groups on specific topics and regions of interest.