

TIMMAWA

TIGNAY DAGITI MANNALON A MANGWAYAWAYA ITI AGNO
(PEASANT MOVEMENT TO FREE THE AGNO RIVER)

Apartment # 5, (sa harap ng DMQUNHS), Nancayasan, Urdaneta City

email: staff_timmawa@yahoo.com

Position paper on the ARIIP

In line with the ongoing activities of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) with regards to the resettlement of the people in Sitio Mugging, San Felipe West, San Nicolas, Pangasinan, and with the Philippine Government's pending loan application to the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the fund of Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project (ARIIP), Tignay Dagiti Mannalon a Mangwayawaya ti Agno (TIMMAWA, Peasant Movement to Free the Agno River) calls for the stop of the implementation of the ARIIP.

Issues emerging from the construction and operation of the San Roque Dam, in which the plan for the ARIIP is a part, are yet to be addressed and resolved. It is unjust and improper to continue with the construction of any other component of the SRMP without first addressing the adverse effects it has caused. Moreover, before the implementation of the ARIIP, thorough and transparent studies should be done to avoid similar incidences to happen again in the detriment of the already marginalized farmers and peasants

We express our strong opposition in the implementation of the ARIIP for the following reasons:

ARIIP for flood control:

“Ito rin ay naglalayon na makatulong na mabawasan ang malawakang pagbaha sa lalawigan sa panahon ng malakas na pag-ulan.” (It also aims to help lessen the widespread flooding in the province in times of hard rains) - leaflets of NIA on the ARIIP ; September 13, 2005

In the position paper of TIMMAWA in 2003, it states there “TIMMAWA still wonders and suspects that the ARIIP is also the flood control component of the San Roque Dam...”. It clearly express our doubt and fear that the ARIIP will be used primarily, not for irrigation purpose but as a part of the flood control component, primarily due to the lack of consultation and participation of the people in the planning level of the San Roque Multipurpose Dam Project The re-regulating dam will be used to control the floodwater regularly released by the SRD as it continues with its operation. ARIIP canals will be used to distribute floodwater from the dam during rainy season to areas not usually affected by flooding to avoid

the repeat of the 2003 and 2004 floods in the commercial and growth areas caused by the water released by the San Roque Dam during typhoons. If floodwater is released through the irrigation canals to the farms, damages such as flooding of the crops or erosion of farmlands are threat to the common farmers.

Contradiction in Attaining Both Purposes of Power Generation and Irrigation (Risk of Irrigation Water Shortage) (Risk in Attaining Project Target)

Both components of the San Roque Multi-purpose Dam Project, the power and the irrigation, depend on the same reservoir for each source of water. It implies that the water amount for the irrigation in ARIIP has to adjust with the water amount necessary for the power supply of SRPC, especially in dry season or still more in drought. Given the risk of such water shortage, there is no assurance that ARIIP could annually irrigate 34,450 ha (according to the SRMP proponents, 87,000 ha) as it aims at.

We believe that any irrigation connected to the dam will be an inefficient irrigation and will only cause added burdens to the farmers.

Increase in Irrigation fee, eradication of farmers' cooperation and independent management of CIS, risk of integrated irrigation system

The irrigation fee to be collected by NIA is additional burden to the farmers. This means that opposed to helping the farmers yield higher, the NIA will join the entities that collects from farmers and leaves them with almost nothing for themselves after harvest time.

As of now, in areas where it operates, the NIA collects around P 2,500.00 per hectare in a year (P1, 000.00 or 2 cavans of palay on rainy season and P1,500.00 or 3 cavans of palay on dry season). These are usually collected during the harvest seasons which are on December and June.

In addition, there are existing Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS) which are operated and managed by farmers organizations. These systems are independent from NIA and do not pay NIA any irrigation fee. They usually only require their members to contribute labor for the maintenance of the CIS.

To summarize, if the NIA will construct and operate the ARIIP with the purpose of integrating NIA-managed Irrigation systems and independent, farmer-operated irrigation systems into one big irrigation scheme, we visualize the following effects:

1. Increase of irrigation fee. In other places where NIA builds irrigation canals using loans from Foreign Funding Agencies, the payment of the amount used for the construction of the ARIIP will be passed to the farmers through the collection of higher irrigation fee.
2. Additional expenses for farmers formerly depending on CIS. The farmers have to pay irrigation fee instead of contribute labor as they do without the ARIIP. The old practice helps farmers save their

harvest for their own use but with NIA's collection scheme, the amount of palay left to farmers will be lessen.

3. Higher risk of water shortage during dry season due to the conflict in prioritization of water needs for the power generation and for the irrigation.
4. And because the whole irrigation system is integrated into one grandiose system and attached to the dam, the risk of water shortage will cover a wider area and will affect a higher number of farmers.
5. A grandiose irrigation system such as the ARIIP is more unmanageable for the farmers or for the NIA itself.

Recommendations:

For NIA

We call on the NIA to review their plan, to come up with a more manageable, farmer-friendly irrigation scheme instead of grandiose, expensive and high risk irrigation system. This will require review of the plan and intensive grass root level consultation and participatory planning and decision making, which never happened in the case of ARIIP.

As an organization of farmers and peasants, TIMMAWA suggests the following to be considered by NIA in its implementation of an irrigation project. We are certain that these suggestions will serve really assist needy farmers more than the ARIIP can do and will cause lesser direct and indirect negative impacts on them if there will ever be.

1. Rehabilitation of existing canals –. This is due to the sediment build up in the canals due to the silts being deposited from mining firm in the upper part of the Agno River. According to a report by NIA itself, NIA canals cannot effectively irrigate all its service area even in rainy season.

Pangasinan Irrigation

Irrigation System	Target Area (has)	Actual served in has. (dry season)	Actual served in has (wet season)
ARIS	20,000	5,500	14,200
LARIS	10,200	2,900	7,400
ADRIS	8,100	1,100	5,200
CIS	11,600	no data	11,600

2. to build small impounding dams instead of one big irrigation dam. The farming in Pangasinan is characterized by small, divided and unorganized practice. This is due to the backwardness of agriculture in the country. Small impounding dams will serve and benefit the farmers more instead of a big, centralized irrigation dam.

3. the use of water pumps is also recommended. This guarantees that the irrigation needs of the farmers will be sufficed accordingly and this has a lower risk of water shortage than depending on a grandiose

irrigation system.

4. referring to NIA's Partial report on their Irrigation services, we can see that in the rainy season, the CIS can more effectively deliver water than the NIA-managed IS. This implies that a locally managed IS can serve its purpose effectively. Helping them tap more water sources in the locality and improve their facilities can benefit them more instead of introducing a totally new irrigation system. This will also enhance their cooperation and unity less the irrigation fee on NIA managed IS.

For JBIC

Just the same, we call on Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to decline funding projects disguised as development projects but are in fact burdensome for the people. Japan's direct invasion of the Philippines in the Second World War has caused death and injuries of all kinds to our people. By funding these onerous projects, Japan is still contributing to the crises of the Filipino People. We call on the JBIC to help explore other alternative irrigation system projects which will be genuinely for the farmers, their development and the development of agriculture in the Philippines. Loans made in the name of the Filipino people should truly benefit the people, this is one of the responsibility of international funding agencies such as the JBIC.