Myanmar Salween pathways

Introduction

- Salween (Thanlwin) flows through 4 ethnic border states
- No mainstream dams, but at least 5 large dams planned
- Site of massive human displacement from civil war
- World-class ecosystem integrity and biodiversity
- Great indigenous knowledge and heritage

Pathway 1: Salween large dams
big hydropower now, peace will follow

- Narrative: Large hydropower dams in the Salween basin are necessary for Myanmar’s economic development and cannot wait. Recent and ongoing violent conflict is not an insurmountable obstacle to infrastructure. Plans for dams and other projects should proceed.

Large dam pathway

- Salween River = electricity and revenue
- Past and present conflict ignored
- Old blueprints, new context
- Myanmar energy crisis as excuse, yet electricity to be exported
- Secretive planning process
Pathway 2: Salween local solutions
Peace and political settlement first, then truly sustainable local development

Narrative: Large dams will undermine local lives, ecology and peace in the Salween Basin. The people need a form of development that is local and sustainable. That should be the thrust of negotiations for peace and political settlement. The Salween Peace Park initiative is an example that would lead toward peaceful economic development.

Salween local solutions pathway
- Moratorium on large dams
- Indigenous-managed conservation areas
- Renewable energy for local electrification
- Sustainable economic initiatives

War or peace?
Understanding the role of large dams in Myanmar’s peace process
- The history of armed conflict in Myanmar cannot be ignored
- The conflict is not about lack of development
- Militarized dam sites cannot be ‘sustainable’
- Peace and conflict impact assessments required
- Peace is possible for the first time in a lifetime
- Large dams threaten hopes for peace

Dinosaurs or pioneers?
Stark choices for the new government
20th Century history
- Infrastructure via military control
- Massive ecological harms
- Engines of corruption
- Promise of conflict for years to come
- Dubious claims of economic benefit

21st Century promise
- Renewable energy revolution
- Self-determination and political settlement
- Good governance
- Peace in our lifetime
- Sustainable economic development

THANK YOU!