



Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai paid a visit to the Peoples Republic of China on 23 January 2020 to seek cooperation in alleviating drought in the Mekong River basin.

The prolonged drought situation since 2019 in the Mekong River basin, caused by intermittent rainfall and climate change, has greatly reduced the water levels in the Mekong River and reservoirs across the region. This has raised concerns on the effects on the ecosystem and particularly the livelihoods of the people in the downstream communities of the Mekong River, including Thailand. The Royal Thai Government has been highly vigilant and implemented the necessary measures to counter the drought situation and mitigate its impact.

In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha had instructed Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai to visit China - the Mekong upstream country - to discuss ways and means to alleviate the drought.

During the visit, Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai met State Councilor/Foreign Minister Wang Yi of the Peoples Republic of China in the morning of 23 January 2020. Both sides agreed that the severity of the drought situation caused by global warming has been affecting every riparian country, including China.

The Thai Foreign Minister sought cooperation from the Chinese government in alleviating this problem and mitigating the impact faced by the people in the downstream countries.

State Councilor/Foreign Minister Wang Yi thanked Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai for travelling urgently to Beijing to discuss this matter in person, which clearly reflected the Royal Thai Government's high priority on this matter. The Chinese side agreed to exert its utmost efforts to help mitigate the impact of the drought.

In the evening of the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples Republic of China informed the Royal Thai Embassy in Beijing that following its prompt coordination with the related Chinese authorities as a result of the discussion between the two foreign ministers, the Chinese government decided to discharge more water from Jinghong Dam at an additional rate of 150 cubic-meter per second, or 15-20 per cent, from 24 January 2020 onwards.

This will help alleviate drought in the downstream countries. In addition, the Chinese authorities will continue to coordinate closely with their Thai counterparts on this matter, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.