

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

DPR KOREA

DONOR UPDATE 15 SEPTEMBER 2003

URGENT NEEDS FOR ESSENTIAL DRUGS, IMMUNIZATION AND NUTRITION REHABILITATION

- UNICEF funding still only 46 per cent half way through 2003
- Additional 80,000 infants vaccinated and 2,500 severely malnourished children treated since the last update
- Gravity-fed water systems set to bring new hope to vulnerable children

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

International and inter-Korean developments

There are positive developments towards resolution of the dispute over the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). After some months of disagreement over the format for future talks on the issue, the parties have now all agreed to hold six-party talks involving China, the DPRK, Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia and the USA. Within this format, bilateral discussions between the DPRK and the USA will also take place. The first talks began at the end of August.

Should subsequent talks succeed in resolving the nuclear issue, there could also be a package of much needed rehabilitation and development assistance for the DPRK. Although the humanitarian programme has proved highly successful, as shown in the results of the 2002 nutrition assessment, it has not been able to tackle many of the structural causes of the crisis.

Notably little has been achieved of any scale to rehabilitate aging drinking water supply systems and crumbling social infrastructure or to resolve chronic energy shortages. These all contribute to prolonging and exacerbating the suffering of children and other vulnerable groups in the DPRK.

Also of note is that UNICEF will hold its first Annual Consultation with the Government of the ROK on 26 September, at which cooperation for children in the DPRK will feature prominently. The UNICEF delegation to this meeting will be led by UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, and will include the outgoing and incoming UNICEF Representatives to the DPRK.



The boundaries and names shown do not imply official UN endorsement.

SARS prevention measures

With the control of SARS in China and other neighbouring countries, the DPRK Government has suspended the measures it had taken to prevent the disease. Thus, normal operating conditions have been restored for the humanitarian agencies in the country. Incoming missions have also resumed. There is still vigilance at entry points, with all passengers still having to undergo health checks. Anyone exhibiting symptoms, especially fever, is to be retained at the Friendship Hospital in Pyongyang for observation.

Funding shortfalls

The situation on funding has improved since the first quarter of the year but significant shortfalls remain. These shortfalls are mainly in the non-food sectors of the humanitarian appeal. For example, the UNICEF appeal is only 46% funded and WHO's only around 50% funded. Under funding and delayed funding in the non-food sectors continues to hinder humanitarian action aimed at alleviating the suffering of children and other vulnerable groups.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

New drinking water schemes show way forward for the sector

UNICEF has concluded planning of two new water supply schemes for Hyesan City (Rygang Province) and Hoeryong City (North Hamgyong Province) in the vulnerable northeast of the country. These complement those already ongoing in Jongpyong and Kowon Counties (South Hamgyong Province) and Kosan County (Kangwon Province).

Water supply systems have continued to degrade during the eight years since the beginning of humanitarian action in the DPRK. Though 83% of the population access drinking water through piped systems, it is estimated that these only serve 20-50% of needs today, depending on the location. Among the problems faced are the degraded quality of the pipes and pumps – in Hyesan, only 2 out of 12 pumps are now functioning – but also chronic shortages of energy, limiting the amount of time pumps can function. New ideas are needed, and UNICEF has them.



Gravity water system under development in Kosan County, Kangwon Province

The new scheme for Hyesan, for instance, involves changing the water source entirely from the Amnok River to a stream 15 kilometres away above any human habitation and completely free of contamination. By using this source and piping the water downhill, gravity eliminates the necessity to pump the water and gets around the need to buy and maintain pumps and the need to have adequate energy supplies. Given the topography of the country, with abundant perennial water sources in hills and mountains, this is obviously the solution for the future. Setting-up the schemes is very labour-intensive, but this provides additional employment to local people, with WFP providing food-for-work. It also, of course, reduces the threat of communicable diseases for children and others, and thus the burden on the health services.

More families gain access to clean water

Around 10,000 more families in Jongpyong, Kowon (both in South Hamgyong province) and Kosan (Kangwon province) counties now have clean water as a result of recent rehabilitation of their piped water supplies. In total, over 20,000 families in these three counties have benefited from UNICEF water assistance over the past year. Work in the Jongpyong county town (ECHO funded) was completed in August. This project involved construction of a small reservoir/dams, replacement of pumping stations, setting-up of a small water treatment station, laying of hundreds of kilometers of primary, secondary and tertiary water pipes and drilling of water bore-wells / installing hand pumps in schools, nurseries and kindergartens.

Immunisations continue for children and pregnant women

During the past three months an estimated 80,000 infants received vaccinations against measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and tuberculosis – helping to protect them from illness, disability and death. With UNICEF assistance, monthly vaccination sessions were held at over 5,000 sites throughout the country. A new vaccine family card was introduced and an inventory of cold chain equipment in some 6,000 hospitals and clinics throughout the country is almost completed, the results of which will guide future procurement of immunization items. One priority is to now ensure regular reporting of vaccination coverage results from each county, to help identify those children who are being missed by the programme.

Ensuring essential health treatments for children and women

Over 2,000 health facilities, mainly at the village level, received “very vital” medicines thereby ensuring that those children with illnesses such as pneumonia and diarrhoea could be treated promptly. The UNICEF assisted Central Medical Warehouse made deliveries to all twelve provinces / cities throughout the country. Over 90% of deliveries were completed on time to: 2,050 Ri clinics, 117 county hospitals, 11 provincial paediatric hospitals, 11 provincial maternity hospitals and 2 central paediatric and maternity hospitals. Full details of the 2003 essential medicines delivery plan, current health facilities coverage and the types of medicines provided are available from the UNICEF Pyongyang office.

Severely malnourished children – life-saving nutritional rehabilitation

Over the past three months, around 2,500 severely malnourished children were treated for malnutrition and associated illnesses, usually diarrhoea or pneumonia, at 12 paediatric hospitals and thirteen baby homes in all provinces. The October 2002 nutrition assessment showed there are around 70,000 severely malnourished children throughout the country and many of these children will die unless life-saving hospital treatment is given. ECHO funding in the second half of 2002 ensured the regular availability of therapeutic milk from end 2002 until mid-2003. A new ECHO funded project “improving health and nutrition services in three vulnerable northeast provinces” has recently started. Additional funds are now sought to ensure that severely malnourished children in the other nine provinces and cities can be treated.

Field visits

During the past three months, UNICEF staff made field-monitoring visits to health facilities (hospitals and clinics), children’s institutions, kindergartens and primary schools, nurseries and other specific project sites in 11 of the 12 provinces / cities countrywide. Main findings were:

- Sharp increases in diarrhoea. Pneumonia was the second most common cause of childhood illness, after diarrhoea.
- Sharp increases in the number of children admitted to hospitals with severe malnutrition as a consequence of diarrhoea and, in part, due to more referrals for hospital treatment now that the cold winter weather has passed.
- Over 95% of health facilities were able to treat uncomplicated diarrhoea and pneumonia on the day of the field visits. This was mainly due to UNICEF’s priority allocation of funds for “very vital” medicines as well as more regular, reliable deliveries by the UNICEF assisted central medical warehouse.
- Provincial paediatric hospitals had the essential items needed to treat severely malnourished children
- Primary school students in the northeast of the country had received UNICEF basic school materials – pencil, ruler and eraser – provided using 2002 funds.

UNICEF, as is the case for other UN agencies, currently has access to 162 out of 206 counties (85 per cent of the population).

Improving Family Care Practices – Facts for Life

UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health completed a new family practices book containing the most important information on good care for pregnant women and young children. Care practices are one most important factors influencing a young child’s growth and development and the recent nutrition assessment highlighted several care practices that could be improved – including infant and young child feeding practices – and which would have direct, significant benefit to the young child. An initial 100,000 copies of this Korean language book - the result of an inter-Ministerial effort over the past year - will be provided to families and caregivers in the more vulnerable northeast provinces.

New situation analysis

UNICEF recently completed an updated analysis of the situation of children and women in the DPRK. This will be available in hard copy in October and, at the same time, will be posted on the new UNICEF DPRK website

UNICEF web-site launched

In August, the new UNICEF DPRK web-site was launched. Information on the country situation as well as UNICEF’s programmes in the DPRK may be found at <http://www.unicef.org/dprk>

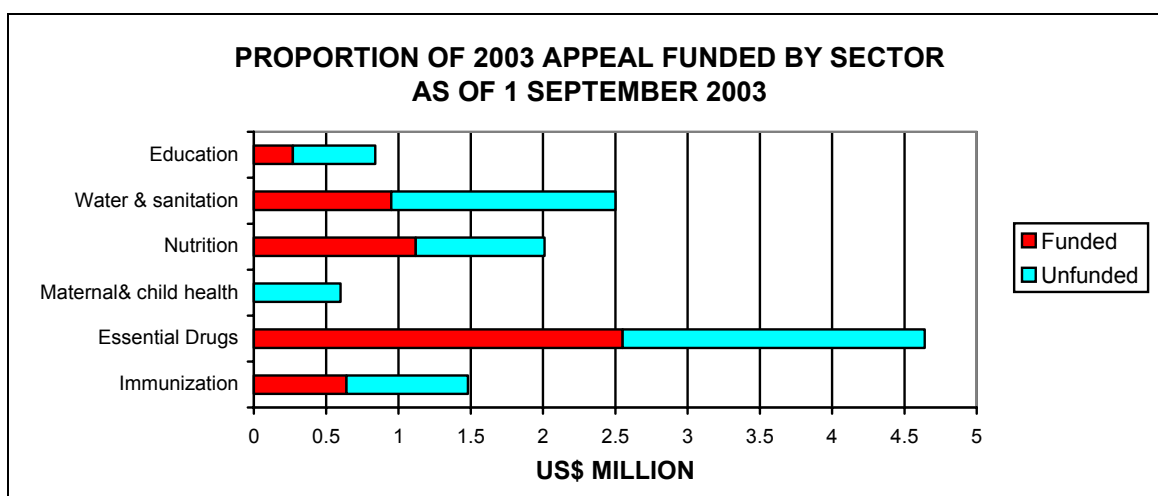
New UNICEF Representative

Mr Richard Bride left the DPRK on 23 August at the end of his mission. He joins the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok as Deputy Regional Director. The new UNICEF Representative, Pierrette Vu Thi, is expected to arrive in Pyongyang on 4 October. Ms Vu Thi will be the first ever woman representative of a UN agency in the DPRK. Up to this appointment, she worked on coordination of UNICEF’s humanitarian response for post-war Iraq at New York Headquarters.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

As part of the 2003 UN Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for the DPRK, UNICEF appealed for US\$ 12,096,000 to support its Emergency Programme for children and women in the country. The table and graph below show the current funding status of the Appeal, by sector. This includes an additional US\$ 900,000 from UNICEF regular resources.

Sector	Target (US\$)	Funded (US\$)	% Funded	Unfunded (US\$)
Expanded programme on immunization (EPI)	1,480,500	643,096	43	837,404
Essential drugs	4,646,250	2,549,098	55	2,097,152
Maternal and child health	598,500	0	0	598,500
Nutrition	2,016,000	1,123,927	56	892,073
Water and environmental sanitation	2,509,500	954,106	38	1,555,394
Education	845,250	270,433	32	574,817
Total	12,096,000	5,540,660	46	6,555,340



The following table indicates the contributions received for the Appeal, by donor.

Donor	Contribution (US\$)	Purpose
UNICEF (additional RR)	900,000	EPI, essential drugs, nutrition
European Community (ECHO)	1,399,854	Essential drugs, nutrition
Denmark	769,250	EPI, nutrition, water & sanitation, education
Sweden	582,050	EPI, essential drugs, nutrition
Norway	561,960	EPI, essential drugs, water & sanitation
Republic of Korea	500,000	EPI, essential drugs, nutrition
Korean Committee for UNICEF	390,331	EPI, essential drugs, nutrition
Finland	322,929	Water & sanitation, education
Italy	114,286	Essential drugs
Total	5,540,660	

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

Under funding and late funding for UNICEF programmes in the DPRK has forced postponement of activities, slowed implementation of activities and reduced programme coverage. **Shortfalls in funding prevent UNICEF from providing adequate support and puts children at greater risk of death and malnutrition.** For example, UNICEF is currently only able to provide several “very vital” medicines out of the more than 200 items on the WHO essential medicines list. Additional funding for the procurement of vital medicines is urgently needed. Because of the lack of funding, supplementary foods for school children and pregnant women cannot be fortified. Contributions are urgently needed to initiate procurement of the necessary vitamins and minerals for fortification. Water rehabilitation activities and printing of new primary school textbooks have been postponed until new funding is received.

The table below outlines the most urgent priority requirements.

Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Essential drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 million people in eight provinces/cities and child care institutions nationwide 	2,000,000 (for vital medicines)
2. Immunization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 470,000 children under the age of one year 480,000 pregnant women 	300,000 (for vaccines and critical cold chain equipment)
3. Nutrition rehabilitation / control of micronutrient deficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children below 5 years of age 480,000 pregnant and 450,000 lactating women 70,000 severely malnourished children Whole population for iodized salt 	500,000 (for vitamin-mineral premix for children and pregnant women)
Total		2,800,000

Details of the UNICEF DPRK Emergency Programme can be obtained from:

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