

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

DPR KOREA

DONOR UPDATE 19 NOVEMBER 2003

CHILDREN IN DPRK STILL IN GREAT NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- 800,000 young children are chronically malnourished and 70,000 children are severely acutely malnourished
- UNICEF funding still only 49 per cent so far in 2003
- UNICEF appeals for US\$ 12.7 million for action in 2004

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

International and inter-Korean developments

More talks towards a resolution of the dispute over the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear programme are expected soon. Should these talks, involving China, the DPRK, Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia and the USA, 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.



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

Humanitarian assistance still needed to save lives

There have been tangible improvements in the situation of children in the DPRK over the past few years. Objective evidence for this comes from the various nutrition surveys conducted by the government with technical and financial assistance from UNICEF and WFP. Although these improvements are very welcome, they should not be overstated and the humanitarian crisis continues; 42% of all children below the age of seven years are chronically malnourished and there are still 70,000 children who are severely acutely malnourished (wasted) and at immediate risk of death if not provided with hospital-based rehabilitation. Further, continued humanitarian assistance is needed if the recent gains in child health and nutrition are not to be reversed.

The situation on funding has improved since the first half 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 49% 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 some.



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 60,000 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.

Monitoring / Field visits

Access and monitoring are of concern to both donors and UNICEF. UNICEF has however, been able to do a lot to improve its systems of monitoring. For instance:

- Incoming supplies are stored in central warehouses to which UNICEF staff have full access
- Distribution lists are drawn up jointly by concerned government Ministries and UNICEF staff
- Distributions to distant provinces are effected using trucks owned and operated by UNICEF
- Distribution lists are shared with other humanitarian agencies, so that their staff will know what they should expect to see of UNICEF assistance during their field monitoring visits.
- UNICEF staff have increased their presence in the field, with a special emphasis on maintaining a presence in the more vulnerable northeast.

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 during the summer months
- 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 pediatric 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 163 out of 206 counties (85 per cent of the population).

Baseline nutrition assessments in disadvantaged counties

A new Programme of Co-operation between the DPRK and UNICEF, for the period 2004-2006, will begin in January. Alongside the still very important humanitarian action nationwide, UNICEF will support more focused actions in a selected number of vulnerable counties/cities. In all, ten counties and cities in nine provinces will be earmarked for a focused approach to ensuring that all children survive, grow and develop to their full potential. In these counties UNICEF will be seeking to demonstrate how child and maternal malnutrition can be reduced significantly and sustainably. Baseline surveys are now being conducted in the first three counties by the government Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF. The surveys will give information on the health/nutritional situation as well as information in education and water and sanitation. Information gained will be used as the basis for planning actions in these counties. Findings of the surveys will be available in December.

New situation analysis

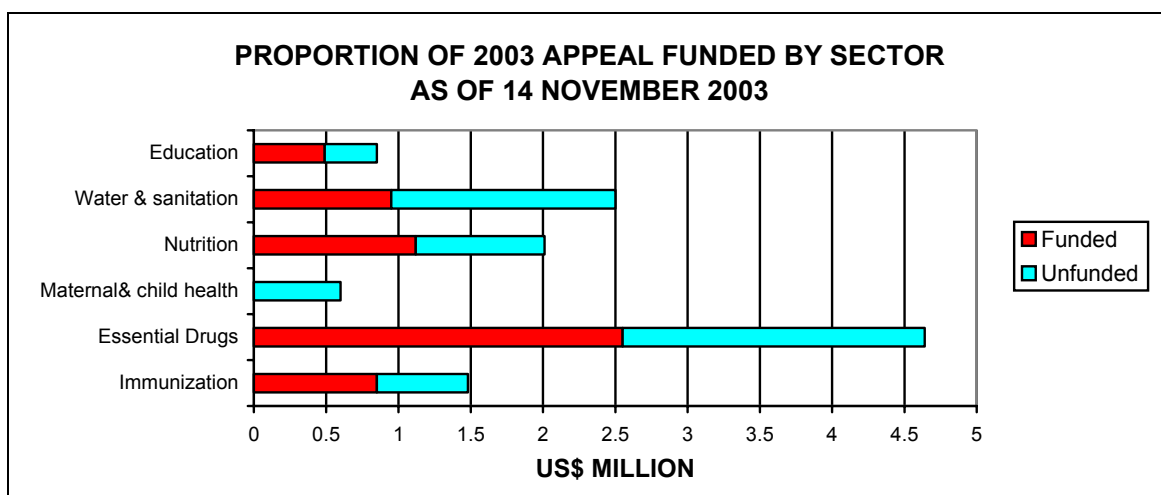
UNICEF recently completed an updated analysis of the situation of children and women in the DPRK. Copies are available from UNICEF Pyongyang as well as on the new UNICEF DPRK web-site <http://www.unicef.org/dprk>

3. 2003 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.

TABLE 1: 2003 APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING* BY SECTOR AS OF 14 NOVEMBER 2003				
Sector	Target (US\$)	Funded (US\$)	% Funded	Unfunded (US\$)
Expanded programme on immunization (EPI)	1,480,500	853,090	58	627,410
Essential drugs	4,646,250	2,535,264	55	2,110,986
Maternal and child health	598,500	0	0	598,500
Nutrition	2,016,000	1,150,262	57	865,738
Water and environmental sanitation	2,509,500	954,110	38	1,555,390
Education	845,250	488,387	58	356,863
Total	12,096,000	5,981,113	49	6,114,867

* Includes additional US\$ 900,000 from UNICEF regular resources



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

TABLE 2: FUNDS RECEIVED FOR 2003 APPEAL BY DONOR AS OF 14 NOVEMBER 2003		
Donor	Contribution (US\$)	Purpose
European Community (ECHO)	1,412,357	Essential drugs, nutrition
Denmark	769,250	EPI, nutrition, water & sanitation, education
Sweden	582,050	EPI, essential drugs, nutrition
Norway	989,910	EPI, essential drugs, water & sanitation, education
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	5,081,113	

4. 2004 APPEAL REQUIREMENTS

New UNICEF DPRK Appeal for 2004

UNICEF has appealed for US\$ 12.7 million as part of the 2004 Consolidated Appeal for DPR Korea. The 2004 programme, finalized in collaboration with the Government line ministries and other partner agencies, has the following components:

Table 3: 2004 APPEAL REQUIREMENTS	
Project	Budget (US\$)
Expanded Programme on Immunization	1,299,200
Essential medicines	5,118,400
Safe-motherhood	343,840
Nutritional rehabilitation, prevention of malnutrition and control of micronutrient deficiencies	2,358,720
Water and environmental sanitation	2,732,800
Basic education	924,000

Further information on the 2004 appeal can be found at new UNICEF DPRK web-site <http://www.unicef.org/dprk>

5. 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. Water rehabilitation activities and printing of new primary school textbooks have been postponed until new funding is received. No new maternity hospitals have been equipped to be able to handle life-threatening delivery emergencies.

The table below outlines the most urgent priority requirements through December 2003.

Table 4: PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS AS OF NOVEMBER 2003		
Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Essential drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 million people in eight provinces/cities Children and pregnant women referred to provincial hospitals in three provinces and one city 	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 	200,000 (for vaccines and critical cold chain equipment)
3. Maternal and child health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 480,000 pregnant women 	300,000 (for equipment for safe child deliveries)

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