

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION UPDATE

DPR KOREA

29 APRIL 2008

IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PARTNERS UNICEF RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN IN THE SECTORS OF HEALTH, NUTRITION, WATER, SANITATION HYGIENE AND EDUCATION

The impact of the 2007 floods on last year's harvest, combined with poor spring crops and increased food prices may lead to a significant food crisis, which will impact on children and women and could lead to reversal of the gains made on their nutritional situation over the past decade.



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Quoting government estimates, FAO announced a shortfall of 1.66 million metric tons in the production of cereals for the year 2007. This is attributed to the impact of the serious floods that hit most parts of DPRK in August last year.

DPRK experienced an unusually dry winter with very little snow fall and precipitation. The difficult situation with minimal soil moisture was compounded by the almost total absence of fertilizers. Therefore the prospects of the next spring crop look bleak. In addition as a result of tensions with the newly elected South Korean Government, unlike previous years, DPRK has not received fertilizer and food assistance from the Republic of Korea.

These signs portend a very difficult year ahead. Prices of staple foods in the capital Pyongyang have doubled over the past year and are now at their highest recorded levels since 2004. We have already seen some early signs of increasing numbers of malnourished children seeking treatment in hospitals. The international community in DPRK is seriously concerned about these developments. WFP estimates that more than 6.5 million people in DPRK suffer from food insecurity – a figure that can be expected to rise if action is not taken to address the growing food shortages.

A sharp deterioration in the food situation will aggravate the precarious nutritional status of millions of children and women and could reverse the gains made over the past decade. Based on the last nutrition survey conducted in 2004, chronic malnutrition of children under 5 stood at 37% and malnutrition of mothers at over 30%. UNICEF is working with the UN Country Team and other agencies in DPRK to prepare ourselves to do whatever is possible in these circumstances to protect the well being of the vulnerable populations.

UNICEF programmes in the sectors of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene and education are all critical in these efforts. While these programmes are making good progress, UNICEF is still unfunded for half of our needs. Investments now will enable us not only to deliver results through proven interventions, but also equip ourselves with a better ability to respond to the potential crisis.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

In DPRK, UNICEF is implementing a two-tier system of national and focus county interventions. At the national level UNICEF supports the provision of basic social services in areas such as immunization, essential drugs and nutritional supplementation. In selected focus counties, sectoral programmes converge to allow for innovation and modeling that could later be replicated or taken to scale with the Government's own or external resources.

Contributions to UNICEF in DPRK are mostly used to procure vital supplies for the provision of basic services such as essential drugs, vaccines, micronutrients, pipes and fittings for water supply systems. Most of these are procured outside of DPRK through our Supply Division in Copenhagen or through our China office. Ten international staff members are working to manage funds received, monitor field activities and provide technical assistance to counterparts providing basic social services.

Health and Nutrition

In 2007 routine vaccination coverage reached more than 96% for all the antigens except DPT+HepB which is 91.4 %. Moreover 96% of pregnant women received two doses of TT vaccine. As a result DPRK will be receiving approximately half a million US\$ reward funding from GAVI for the expanded DPT3 coverage in 2006. Application was submitted to GAVI in February to introduce the measles 2nd dose from July 2008. A nation-wide cold chain assessment will be carried out during the 2nd quarter to assess the cold chain status of the country and develop a five year countrywide cold chain replacement plan.

To address the main causes of child and maternal morbidity UNICEF continued provision of essential medicine. Quarterly essential medicine kits were provided to 2,154 health facilities providing primary health care during the first quarter out of total 9,212 kits that would be distributed in 2008. 2/3 of the annual requirement already procured and remaining 3,000 kits will be ordered soon. Approximately 8.8 millions people living in accessible counties will benefit from these essential medicines.

Diarrhoea is still the number one cause of child morbidity and mortality in DPRK. In order to address the common illnesses, UNICEF supports the local production of Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) through provision of raw materials and technical assistance. Last year 3.8 million sachets low osmolarity of ORS had been

produced which met 75% of the annual requirement. In 2008, the target was fixed to produce 85% of the country requirements. The capacity of the ORS factory will be further improved with the provision of 2 new foiling and filling machines expected to be installed in May 2008. In order to strengthen quality a good manufacturing practices (GMP) inspection was conducted in March.

In the area of nutritional supplementation, 33 million tablets of multi micronutrients out of the total 55 million tablets are procured and distribution is ongoing to 365,000 estimated pregnant women during the first 6 months of pregnancy in all accessible areas. This is coupled with efforts on training household doctors through the printing of educational leaflets on the use of the micronutrient tablets which will be distributed to the network of section doctors to raise awareness on the use and increase coverage from 70% to 90%. The balance of 22 million tablets are planned to be procured in the second quarter as soon as funds are received.

On Child Health Days held twice a year nationwide, over 2 million children under 5 continued to receive Vitamin A and deworming tablets. Coverage is reported to reach almost 100% every year. Preparation for the May Child Health Day is underway, two million vitamin A capsules and two million deworming tablets have been procured. UNICEF is supporting the Government to take the opportunity of the mobilization of Child Health Day to disseminate nationwide messages on diarrhoea prevention and control campaign through distribution of leaflets on the use of ORS and on hygiene promotion to all care takers. Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) prevention will be the focus for the next Child Health Day in November.

In 2007, for the first time 3.5 million school children also received de-worming tablets, with coverage of nearly 100%. De-worming tablets are now being procured in preparation for the November 2008 Child Health Day, as this channel is proving to be very effective for reaching children with critical intervention package in health and nutrition.

An information package for newly wed couples providing information on a wide range of subjects including HIV/Aids awareness and caring practices for women before and during pregnancies is being finalized. It will be piloted in selected focus counties before being printed for nationwide use.

Preparation of the observance of the national breastfeeding week on the theme of "Supporting Mother to Provide the Best Start for Every Child" is ongoing. To support the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, a booklet on breastfeeding and posters on the new breastfeeding policy and the 10 steps of breast feeding are being prepared to be printed in the second quarter.

In order to build up the capacity of the section doctor system which is quite unique in DPRK, a comprehensive training package for section doctors including a reference manual was drafted in collaboration with other agencies in 2007. The finalization of the training package was unfortunately delayed due to the emergency flood response. Agencies agreed that the finalization of the package and resource manual and the progressive roll out will be a priority in 2008. Agencies assigned against each of the modules are responsible to decide the main content of the modules relevant to section doctors' job descriptions. Once the outline is decided and endorsed by the members of the Health theme group, then consultant/s shall be hired to develop the detailed contents of the modules, design them and develop different components of package. The first batch of the section doctors training will commence from July 2008.

Following UNICEF advocacy, starting in 2008, WFP will be providing blended fortified foods to 7 additional Baby Homes where the nutritional situation is judged as fragile. Several rounds of discussions were held with WFP to strengthen collaboration in their new 2 year programme due to start in July 2008.

The development of the model care nursery framework is ongoing in focus counties; designs for rehabilitation of two additional nurseries are completed and scheduled for the second quarter of 2008. Training on breastfeeding will be continued to caregivers and three health facilities will be assessed in view of being certified as Baby friendly (2 have already been certified as baby friendly in 1996).

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

UNICEF and the Ministry of City Management (MoCM) agreed to establish a project management unit composed of 13 members, responsible of implementing an ambitious 2008 Annual Work Plan.

At the national level, assessments were carried out in several counties to identify suitable locations where the deteriorated existing pump system could be replaced by a gravity fed water supply systems (GFS). Three counties have now been identified for provision of safe drinking water through gravity fed systems. A fourth one is being considered for a mixed gravity and pump based system based on the precondition that uninterrupted electricity will be available to operate the system.

Detailed designs for new focus counties are being prepared by Provincial Design institutes which were equipped with design equipments and were provided with improved training techniques during 2007. Procurement of supplies has been initiated for one county and others will follow once the detailed designs are finalized. A GFS systems operation and maintenance workshop was organized for more than 30 participants from 6 focus counties under the facilitation of MoCM and the Academy of Science.

In the area of rural sanitation, preparatory work has also been undertaken in developing model latrines for rural households and rural schools based on ventilated improved double pit (VIDP) latrine technology in collaboration with different partners of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) theme group. The model designs were shared with the Ministries of City Management, Education and Public Health for their final endorsement. Based on the approved design the Education Programme is expected to construct 100 school latrine blocks during 2008.

An emergency preparedness workshop held in March included an introduction to the WASH cluster approach, definition of emergency scenarios and required emergency stocks. Coordination efforts will continue with the pre-positioning of emergency stocks for improved preparedness. A total of 871 family kits have already been procured to meet the immediate water needs of 43,000 people for one month.

Response measures for last years floods have been completed, the 26 counties pumps stations received materials for emergency repairs. Calcium hypochlorite distributions were completed in 89 counties benefiting a population of 5 million which were affected by floods in 2007. As part of flood recovery measures procurement of additional pump and motor spare materials are continuing to carry out intensive repairs of pumps and motors in 26 counties. The designs of two flood proof pump stations have been completed and procurement of construction materials has been initiated.

Basic Education

The first quarter of 2008 has seen a quick start up of Education activities in DPRK. Printing consumables mainly ink and spare parts for printing machines have been procured and will support the printing of 7 million textbooks for primary and secondary schools.

A two years plan for the development of Early Learning Standards (ELDS) is under agreement and will be implemented starting from April. The revision of the mathematics curriculum for primary and secondary schools is well underway: a curriculum framework being drafted by a core group of experts in the Ministry of Education (MoE) will be revised in May together with an international consultant.

New material for Life Skills Education is under preparation. First drafts have been submitted for revision and the final version of three flip charts addressing curricular topics for Health and Hygiene (from 4th grade of primary to 2nd grade of secondary school children) will be finalized by April. Finally, a teachers' guide for the Hygiene Pictures Book (for 1st to 3rd grade of primary school) will be printed in April/May.

A four days training on Emergency in Education took place in April. The workshop provided capacity to key MoE officers as well as selected province and county level authorities and resulted in the agreement of an emergency preparedness plan in the area of education. The plan includes agreed responsibilities of the different levels of the education system in assessing, implementing and monitoring emergency response as well as list of supplies to be pre-positioned in the coming months.

Agreement has been reached on the rehabilitation for improving the learning environment of 15 schools and 3 Teachers' Training Centers in 3 counties. Rehabilitation works will start in April and will last for 6 months, benefiting around 11,800 children and 2,978 teachers.

A list of equipment for TTCs (Teachers Training Centers) has been agreed with the MoE and the procurement will start in April. The new equipment and materials will ensure the creation of continuous learning spaces in the TTCs through a library and a multi media center.

The composition of a mathematics kit to be distributed to all classrooms in focus counties is under finalization and the procurement of the equipment will start in May.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Out of the US\$15 million humanitarian requirement for 2008, UNICEF currently still needs over US\$ 8 million to be able to respond to the needs of children and women in DPRK. The response from the donor community has been limited thus far, with new contributions of only US\$ 1.1 million received to date. However UNICEF allocated some of the significant 2007 contributions to meet 2008 humanitarian requirements. As a result as of April, 42% of 2008 HAR requirements are funded.

Table 1: Funds received against HAR requirement by sector (in US\$)**

Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector	Funds Received	Unmet Requirements	% Unfunded
Health, Nutrition and Care	8,000,000	2,961,44	5,038,560	63%
Water ,Sanitation and Hygiene	6,000,000	2,869,27	3,130,729	52%
Education	1,000,000	420,32	579,677	58%
Total*	15,000,000	6,251,033	8,748,967	58%

*The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

** Some of the contributions were received late in 2007 and some were intended to cover humanitarian needs over two years. In addition, the total also includes details about a firm pledge of \$ 943,000 from AusAid.

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

Available contributions 2008 have been used mostly to procure and deliver essential supplies to support critical basic social services for the first half of 2008. The priority requirements for the coming months include the procurement of vaccines, essential medicines and nutritional supplements for the second half of 2008 as well as the construction of 100 school latrine blocks as part of the International Year of Sanitation.

Table 3: Urgent priority requirements for the start of 2008

Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Vaccines & essential medicine kits for the second half of 2008	All children under one and pregnant women nation wide and all children under 5 in accessible counties	2,500,000
3. Multiple micronutrient for pregnant women	All pregnant women in accessible counties	1,000,000
3. Improved sanitation & hygiene in schools	More than 50,000 children and 1,500 teachers in 8 counties.	1,000,000
Total Priority Needs*		4,500,000

*The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

Details of the UNICEF DPRK Programme can be obtained from:

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