

UNICEF PLAN OF ACTION

DPR KOREA

IN 2008



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Core Country Data

Child Population ('xxxs)	6,810
U5 mortality rate	55
Infant mortality rate	42*
Maternal mortality ratio (1980-99)	n/a
Primary school enrolment ratio	108**
Primary school enrolment ratio for girls	101**
%U1 fully immunized (DPT)	79***
% population using improved drinking water sources	100****
HIV/AIDS prevalence ('xxxs)	n/a
%U5 suffering moderate and severe malnutrition	23

(Source: The State of the World's Children 2006)

* Government data (1993-1998) – 23

** Ministry of Education data. Net figures not available

*** Ministry of Public Health data 2006 - 82%

**** Government data but field observation indicates much lower coverage

Despite improvements in the political context, the availability and quality of basic social services in health, nutrition, water supply and education for women and children, especially for over two million children under five and 300,000 pregnant women will continue to rely critically on the support of the international community. The devastation caused by the floods in 2007 has further increased the vulnerability of children despite the progress made over the last decade in areas such as reduction of severe child malnutrition. Child and maternal mortality and chronic malnutrition of children under five and pregnant women remain high as a result of prolonged poverty, under resourced health systems, decaying water and sanitation systems, inadequate caring practices for young children and pregnant women and fragile food security.

Summary of UNICEF Emergency Needs for 2008

Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	8,000,000
Water and Environmental Sanitation	6,000,000
Education	1,000,000
Total¹	15,000,000

¹ 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.

1. Critical issues for children and women

Despite the political progress over the past year, the devastation caused by the floods in August 2007 has further increased the vulnerability of the children of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The floods directly impacted the lives of over one million people but many more have been indirectly affected through the destruction and serious damage of basic service infrastructure such as schools, health centres and water supply networks and among them young children and pregnant women tend to be the most vulnerable.

According to government figures, from 1993 to 1998, the under-five mortality rate rose from 27 to 55 per 1,000 live births and has remained at that level since then. This increase resulted from acute food shortages, combined with heightened morbidity and reduced capacity of the health system to manage childhood illness caused by shortages of essential drugs and decaying water and sanitation systems. Though government figures indicate that the majority of the population gets drinking water from piped networks which are considered as improved drinking water sources, field observations show that most of the networks are in very poor conditions, often contaminated and provide water only for a limited number of hours per day. This situation has been exacerbated by the floods causing significant increases in the cases of diarrhoea among young children, jeopardizing the progress made in the area of nutrition over the past decade.

In fact considerable progress has been made in the area of child malnutrition since the crisis of the mid nineties. As documented in the nutrition surveys, between 1998 and 2004, acute malnutrition fell from 16 per cent to 7 per cent and chronic malnutrition from 62 to 37 per cent. In 2006, a government survey and field observation showed that this trend was continuing. However these levels of malnutrition are still considered high by WHO standards. Moreover, some one third of mothers are still found to be malnourished and anaemic.

Primary and secondary schooling in the DPR Korea is free and compulsory, and all children up to the age of 17 years are enrolled, with the country reporting universal literacy. However, economic difficulties have resulted in shortages of textbooks, school materials and fuel for heating during the long sub-zero winters. Learning methods have also not evolved in line with international developments. All these factors have combined to affect negatively the quality of education.

Collaboration with government on humanitarian action improved significantly over the past year. Despite a late release of information on the measles outbreak, the government conducted a very effective mass immunization campaign, vaccinating over 16 million people. Following the August floods, the government extended very good collaboration to aid agencies especially to facilitate the implementation of joint assessments, increased monitoring and additional human resources to carry out emergency responses. However despite these improvements, many challenges remain and notably the access to the populations living in the three northwest provinces of the country which remain inaccessible to international staff since the end of 2006 and where as a result UNICEF had to suspend its support except in the area of immunization and vitamin A.

2. Key Actions and Achievements in 2007

In close collaboration with national and international partners, UNICEF has continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of women and children through its regular programme and through its emergency response to a measles outbreak and floods. It has mainly focused on the priority areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and education. Despite some progress, these areas suffer from chronic shortages of material and financial resources due to the absence of major investments and large scale assistance necessary to the reduction of child mortality and improvement of maternal health.

In the regular programme routine immunization maintained high vaccination coverages of more than 90% for almost all antigens. Essential medicines continued to be provided to over 2,000 health facilities covering over 10 million people to treat the most common childhood diseases although support to the northwest provinces of North Hamgyong and Ryanggang had to be suspended as of June 2007 due to government's refusal to grant access to international staff for monitoring purposes. Nutritional supplementation including vitamin A, multi micro-nutrients and iodine continued and therapeutic milk was provided to all paediatric and county hospitals to treat the severe cases of child malnutrition. The programme continued to improve the access and quality of water supply through the construction of three new gravity fed systems providing quality water to over 75,000 people in three counties. Finally in addition to the support of basic materials for

printing of school textbooks benefiting over 2 million school children, interventions to improve the quality of education increased notably in the areas of teacher training, mathematics curriculum revision and life skill education focused on health and hygiene promotion.

In addition to the regular programme, UNICEF responded to two emergencies in the course of 2007. In the first quarter, in collaboration with WHO and IFRC, UNICEF supported the government to conduct a mass immunization campaign in response to a measles outbreak. Over 16 million people aged 6 months to 45 years of age were vaccinated within a period of three months.

Following the August floods, UNICEF supported emergency response in the areas of health by providing extra essential medicine kits to affected county hospitals and health centres; nutrition by providing extra nutritional supplementation for women and children; and water by providing emergency water kits to 5,000 families and providing chlorine and pump spare parts to flood affected counties.

In addition UNICEF supported government to conduct a detailed assessment of damages of submerged water pump stations and a rapid screening of the nutritional status of children under 5 in the 20 worst flood affected counties. These two assessments will enable UNICEF and government to better address the continuing emergency rehabilitation needs in the areas of nutrition and water supply.

3. Plan of Action for 2008

In DPRK, UNICEF is implementing a two-tier system of national and focus county interventions. At the national level UNICEF will support capacity-building of government counterparts providing basic social services and implementation of national programmes such as immunization and nutritional supplementation. In selected focus counties, sectoral programmes will converge to assure greater impact with limited resources and allow for innovation and modelling that could later be replicated or taken to scale with the Government's own or external resources that might be available in the future;

Health and Nutrition (US\$ 8,000,000)

All women and children, especially children under five and pregnant women, will benefit from the following key interventions:

At the national level:

- Provide vaccines and cold chain equipment to maintain a high immunization coverage of more than 90% for all antigens among children under one and pregnant women.
- Procure and distribute essential medicine to over 2,000 health facilities covering over 10 million people,
- Support the local production of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) for treatment of childhood diarrhoea
- Provide multi-micronutrient and vitamin A supplementation to 300,000 pregnant women
- Provide Vitamin A and deworming two times per year to two million under-five children
- Provide deworming to 3 millions primary school children
- Develop and/or update IEC (Information, Education, Communication) materials to improve the care of young children and pregnant women
- Develop a comprehensive training package and resource manual for household doctors in collaboration with WHO and IFRC

In selected focus counties:

- Promote a model care framework for young children and pregnant women at both the institution (nurseries and health centres) and household level in 10 counties
- Improve the quality of child and maternal health care at the facility level in 10 counties through rehabilitation, provision of equipment and training

Water and Environmental Sanitation (US\$ 6,000,000)

An estimated 5 million people will benefit from the following key interventions:

At the national level:

- Provide water treatment chemicals and spare parts for the provision of safe water to 10 million people living in urban and semi urban areas (provincial capitals and 89 counties affected by floods in 2007)
- Develop an emergency recovery module for counties where existing pumps for provision of safe drinking water have been damaged beyond repair by the 2007 floods
- Strengthen emergency preparedness in water supply through training of partners at national, provincial and county level and pre-positioning of key supplies
- Strengthen water quality monitoring capacity of 6 Provincial Hygiene and Epidemic stations through provision of portable laboratories and relevant trainings.

In selected focus counties:

- Rehabilitate and construct water supply systems in four focus counties to provide safe drinking water to 80,000 people through gravity-fed system
- Construct water supply systems based on emergency recovery module in four flood affected counties to provide safe drinking water to 80,000 people
- Rehabilitate water and sanitation facilities and promote hygiene education in 20 child care institutions benefiting 10,000 children

Education (US\$ 1,000,000)

An estimated 250,000 children will benefit directly from the following key interventions:

At the national level:

- Improve the quality education through child friendly approaches such as curriculum revision, setting standards for school readiness, elaboration and printing of new life skills material;
- Provide paper for the printing of hygiene and health textbooks in primary and secondary schools
- Improve emergency preparedness in education through training staff of the Ministry of Education, local authorities, headmasters and teachers and identification necessary supplies to be procured for improved preparedness.

In selected focus counties:

- Provide basic rehabilitation to, at least, 16 schools in focus counties, benefiting around 16,000 children, through the rehabilitation of the roof and the basic structure of the schools in order to reduce their vulnerability to heavy rains and freezing winter temperatures;
- Provide training to an estimated 10,000 teachers and headmasters on child friendly methodologies;
- Print and distribute new life skills materials and specific innovative material/equipment for mathematics and science, benefiting 8,000 classrooms;

4. Coordination and Partnership

Five inter-agency theme groups comprising UN agencies, development partners and government regularly meet to strengthen coordination in key sectors. UNICEF chairs the groups on Health and Nutrition and Water and Sanitation which were both very active in coordinating sectoral responses to the floods. Weekly inter-agency meetings exchange information among UN agencies and other development partners.

