

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

DPR KOREA

DONOR UPDATE 12 MAY 2005

- Survey indicates some improvement in the nutritional status of young children, but humanitarian assistance needs to be sustained
- 91% of appeal for the emergency programme in DPRK has not yet been funded

1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Malnutrition

The 2004 nutrition survey was conducted in collaboration with WFP and the Government of DPRK. Results showed an improvement on the nutritional status of young children since 2002, pointing to a positive trend. The 2004 survey reported the prevalence rates of stunting as 37%, underweight 23% and wasting 7%. A significant improvement is reported mostly among children 1- 3 years old. However, malnutrition levels are still high according to WHO criteria. In addition, the nutritional status of mothers remained almost the same in 2004 as in 2002. The survey showed an association between maternal nutrition and child nutritional status. The findings suggest that there is a greater need to focus on maternal health and nutrition of children of the young age group to build up on the gains already achieved. The findings also point to the fact that humanitarian aid is reaching beneficiaries, but needs to be sustained.

Humanitarian needs

The difficulties for the state in allocating adequate resources for social services indicate that humanitarian assistance is still required. Although the government is endeavouring to improve the provision of social services and enhance economic growth through a reform process, enhancing household food security, ensuring access to basic social services such as water and health, and improving basic health care remain the most pressing priorities.

Shortage of essential medicines and equipment

A widespread shortage of essential medicines and basic equipment due to the continued deterioration of social services remains a major concern. Local production and importation of drugs has almost completely ceased. Simple equipment is either not in place or is over thirty years old. Knowledge and skills of staff need to be upgraded.

High rates of diarrhoeal diseases and deaths

High prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases caused by contaminated water, use of unsanitary latrines and unhygienic practices reinforces the cycle of malnutrition and contributes to high infant and child morbidity and mortality. The 2004 nutrition assessment did not indicate any improvement in the prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases as such. However, some 70% of mothers of children suffering from diarrhoea reported administering Oral Rehydration salts to treat it, compared to a figure of 58% in the 2002 assessment. Piped water availability has been curtailed and is often contaminated because of the deteriorated infrastructure and distribution system. The treatment of piped water is no longer a regular practice due to lack of national budget. Families now frequently have to seek alternative water sources and the burden of water collection falls on women and children. The perception, knowledge and practices of parents concerning home management of diarrhoeal diseases are also known to be poor.

High maternal mortality ratio

A high rate of maternal mortality caused by a deteriorating health system that is finding it increasingly difficult to deliver good services and manage emergency referrals is another concern.



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

Deteriorating quality of education for children

The improvement in quality of education remains a serious issue, as is the continuous shortages of basic school supplies, often now a charge on parents. There is a shortage of textbooks and basic classroom materials, as well as further degradation of school infrastructure. Field observations and verbal reports indicate that prolonged hardships, such as illness and lack of adequate heating in schools during the long sub-zero winters, are beginning to provoke a pattern of absenteeism. Humanitarian assistance has made modest contributions, but without a definite move towards systemic improvements, sustainability will remain an issue.

2. ACTION

DPRK-UNICEF Annual Review of Cooperation in 2004

The annual review of cooperation in 2004 was held in November. Greater results were achieved in 2004 than in previous years, largely due to increased funding, more than double the funding levels of 2003. UNICEF was able to do more for children. For example:

- The coverage of vital medicines was expanded both in the types of medicines procured, and in sustaining the regular quarterly distribution of medicines to 2,648 health facilities serving the needs of more than 15 million beneficiaries, 65% of the total population of the country.
- Approximately 23,000, 33% of the total 70,000 severely malnourished children nationwide were treated, marking a significant increase from 7% in 2002 and 14% in 2003.
- Almost 6,000 pregnant women received clean and safe delivery services and 250 complicated cases were treated at the referral hospitals of the two provinces of Kangwon and South Hamgyong. This had not been feasible earlier because of lack of funding.
- More than 100,000 families in urban and rural areas in the most vulnerable provinces gained access to clean water, compared to 10,000 families covered in 2003.
- More than US\$ 800,000 was mobilized in response to the Ryongchon train explosion and used to support children getting back to school, assist school rehabilitation, as well as provide learning materials and equipment for damaged kindergartens and nurseries.

Action in 2005

Addressing malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies

In January, with UNICEF support, the Central Medical Warehouse (CMW) distributed two quarters quota of F100 therapeutic milk for the treatment of severely malnourished children. The April distribution which is now ongoing will cover the quota of the third quarter. UNICEF has delivered F100 therapeutic milk to health facilities in DPRK to treat more than 16% of the country's severely malnourished children.

The training of caregivers at child care institutions is ongoing. Training material for staff of child care institutions is in the process of updating. Three nurseries and one baby home have been identified for implementation of the pilot comprehensive approach of model care institutions.

UNICEF continues to provide support to the Government in its effort to achieve Universal Salt Iodization by 2006. In March 2005, a consultant visited the salt iodization factory of Namyang which is to be rehabilitated, and reviewed the design of the factory. Rehabilitation is expected to be completed in August 2005. When the factory is fully operational, it will produce approximately 16,000 MT of iodized salt (35% of the total requirement in DPRK). Production of iodized salt from the five other factories is ongoing. Some of these will also need rehabilitation in the near future.

Multi-micronutrient supplementation to pregnant women during first three months of pregnancy started from September 2004. Distribution was initially limited to Pyongyang, but is now being extended nationwide. In this early stage of programme implementation, there seems to be some logistics problems related to distribution. UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Public Health on the distribution strategy and also in raising public awareness on the importance of multi-micronutrient supplementation, as highlighted by the results of the 2004 nutrition survey. For 2005, multi-micronutrient tablets are available to cover the needs of 315,000 pregnant women (70% of the total nationwide need).

Supplementation of iron/folic acid before pregnancy for prevention of anemia also started in September 2004. As this is still in the pilot stage, distribution needs to be improved. The supplementation is targeted to women aged 23-28 years. In 2005, about 350,000 women are targeted for this supplementation. The supply procured last year is expected to meet the requirement for about 8 months of 2005.

Locally produced blended food, fortified with minerals and vitamins, is a joint project between WFP and UNICEF. The target beneficiaries are 2.5 million children and 480,000 pregnant and lactating women. The fortified food is distributed to children attending nurseries and kindergartens, sick children in hospitals, as well as pregnant and lactating women. In 2005, it is estimated that 45,000 MT will be produced. UNICEF has now procured adequate quantity of minerals and vitamin premix from the ECHO funding to cover needs for the entire year.

Supply of essential medicines and equipment

UNICEF has ordered sufficient quantities of vaccines to fulfill the needs of DPRK up to July 2005. However, with GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) assistance for AD Syringes and safety boxes drying up at the end of 2004, pre-order of further supplies of these items for 2005 looks uncertain. With support from UNICEF's Regional office for East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO) and WHO, the Country Office will assist the government in preparing a submission for the next round of GAVI. Following advocacy by UNICEF, the Ministry of Public Health has agreed to rationalize vaccine distribution, which will increase programme efficiency and effectiveness.

During the first quarter of 2005, with UNICEF support, the Central Medical Warehouse (CMW) distributed medicine kits to Ri clinics/hospitals, provincial/county hospitals and central hospitals in six provinces and Pyongyang city. Midwifery kits were also distributed to Ri clinics and hospitals in two provinces. Lastly, the CMW distributed section doctors' bags to cover the needs of two provinces.

A coordination meeting was held with WHO and IFRC with the aim of harmonizing the list of items of essential drugs provided by different agencies to the health facilities. Concerned agencies re-confirmed their commitment that all items to be provided will continue to be drawn from the essential drug mother list, which itself will be reviewed and updated periodically. The number of items can be different depending on the funding situation of each agency.

A total of 600,000 oral rehydration salts sachets (ORS) were produced locally between January and March. With the additional quantity procured outside the country by UNICEF, approximately 30% of annual requirement for ORS is now covered.

Eight monitoring visits by UNICEF officer are ongoing, as well as joint field visits with government counterparts. These will be particularly useful in improving efficiency of distribution and use of essential medicines.

Maternal and child health

In the area of safe motherhood, a new package of UNICEF supplies on safe motherhood is being developed and endorsed by the Ministry of Public Health for distribution to focus counties and respective Ri hospitals/clinics. The inter-agency Safe motherhood taskforce which is headed by UNICEF is providing support to the Ministry of Public Health in developing a reproductive health strategy for DPRK. The first draft of the document is expected by end of April. A total of 300,000 sheets of partographs and 300,000 ante-natal cards have been printed and distributed to health facilities in April. 120 Ri clinics, five counties and 2 provincial maternity hospitals in North and South Hwanghe provinces have received Emergency Obstetric Care (EmOC) and safe delivery kits.

After successful implementation of the first phase of Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) in 2004, UNICEF will work with the MoPH and WHO in 2005 on the second phase early implementation in two pilot counties. Training will take place in June with the help of an external consultant from WHO regional office (SEARO). The consultant will also provide assistance in updating the guidelines for diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases.

Extending clean water supply and sanitation

The major activities in the sector in the first quarter of the year have been in continuation of projects started in 2004. Supplies in the pipeline have been delivered, or are nearing completion of delivery. While some of these supply items have been internally transported to the relevant sites, other are in the process.

Supplies of pipes and fittings from DFID funding have been received for the rehabilitation of the water supply systems in rural as well as county project sites. Other supplies arrived for the Japan funded project in Bukchong County in South Hamgyong Province. The rehabilitation work started at the end of March and will be completed by end of June. The new funds from ECHO which arrived in late December 2004 have allowed procurement of supplies for the rehabilitation of water supply systems in three more counties of North Hwanghe Province. Rehabilitation of water supply projects in the northeastern provinces of Hyesan and Haeryong cities is now underway.

Assessments have been completed with government counterpart on work to be done to upgrade water supply and sanitation facilities in children's institutions in 4 focus counties. Supplies have been ordered for the upgrading of water supply systems in children's institutions in focus counties of Yonsan, Rinsan and Unryul.

Improving quality of education for children

In March, basic school supplies such as pencils, rulers and erasers were delivered to kindergartens and primary schools in vulnerable provinces of the East and Northeast- Kangwon, South Hamgyong, North Hamgyong, Ryanggang. A quantity of 91 MT of paper has been ordered for textbook production. This will cover approximately 13% of the yearly requirement of paper for primary school text books.

Rehabilitation work for three primary schools also located in vulnerable focus counties is now being completed after interruption of work during the winter months. Standard rehabilitation includes the installation of double-glazed windows and painting, in some cases roofing and the provision of basic furniture. As allowed by funding, a comprehensive approach, including rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation facilities is included in the package of rehabilitation work.

UNICEF has continued to provide support for renovation of education facilities damaged by the Ryongchon train explosion. With assistance from various donors, rehabilitation of partially damaged high school buildings, nurseries and kindergarten is now being completed. Replacement of basic furniture, cultural and play equipment is also provided for.

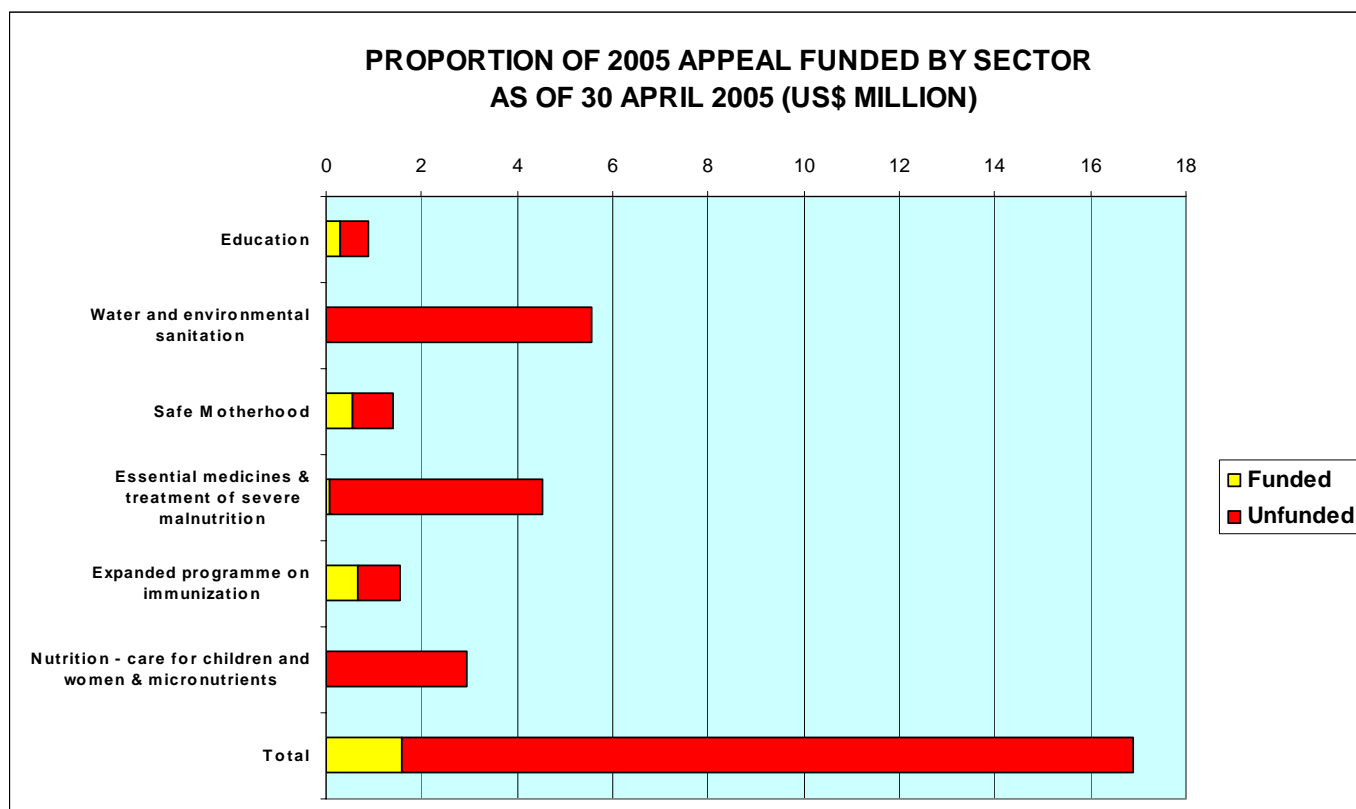
On quality of education, DPRK is part of a regional pilot initiative on assessment of learning achievement. A UNICEF Regional Advisor recently facilitated a Ministry of Education workshop on Life Skills Education for which DPRK has expressed interest. A team of two Ministry of Education counterparts accompanied a UNICEF National Officer to the second (follow-up) workshop on Learning Assessment in April and a plan for piloting learning assessment in selected schools has been firmed up.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

For 2005, the CAP was replaced with a more general "Framework for International Cooperation". UNICEF has presented its funding needs for DPR Korea in its "Humanitarian Action Report 2005" where UNICEF is appealing for US\$ 16,905,000 to support its emergency humanitarian programme for children and women in the country. The table and graph below show the current funding status of the appeal, by sector.

Sector	Target (US\$)	Funded (US\$)	% Funded	Unfunded (US\$)
Nutrition – Care for Children and Women, and Micro-nutrients	2,962,400	0	0	2,962,400
Expanded Programme on Immunization	1,534,400	658,083	43	876,317
Essential Medicines and supplies for treatment of severely malnourished children	4,540,260	80,248	2	4,460,012
Safe Motherhood	1,413,440	552,000	39	861,440
Water and Environmental Sanitation	5,554,500	0	0	5,554,500
Education	900,000	288,940	32	611,060
Total	16,905,000	1,579,271	9	15,325,729

The total includes a maximum recovery cost of 12 per cent. The actual recovery rate on individual contributions will be calculated in accordance with the Executive Board Decision 2003/9 of 5 June 2003.



The following table indicates the contributions received for the Appeal, by donor. UNICEF is grateful for the generous donor contributions which have greatly assisted in continuing humanitarian interventions for the most vulnerable children and women in the DPRK.

Donor	Income/Pledges (US\$)	Purpose
Finland	389,105	Safe Motherhood, Basic Education
United Kingdom National Committee	478,928	Expanded programme on immunization
Sweden	711,238	Safe Motherhood, Basic education
Total	1,579,271	

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

In the past, 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 can prevent UNICEF from providing adequate support and put children at greater risk of death and malnutrition.** The excellent funding received in 2004 is helping to cushion under-funding in early 2005. However, funding is needed to provide for the coming months. The table below outlines the most urgent priority requirements:

Table 3: PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS AS OF APRIL 2005

Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Essential medicines, supplies for severely malnourished children	<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 	1,100,000 (for vital drugs)
2. Safe-motherhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180,000 Pregnant women in five provinces 	500,000 (for emergency obstetric care equipments ,supplies and safe delivery kits)
3 EPI (Expanded Programme on Immunization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 470,000 Children under one years old • 480,000 Pregnant women • Nationwide 	400,000 (vaccines, vaccine devices and cold chain equipments)
4. Water and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of safe water for about 150,000 people in selected counties 	300,000 (rehabilitation of water supply facilities)
5. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600,000 girls and boys in the most vulnerable provinces (north-east) as well as in orphanages in all provinces countrywide 	150,000 (textbooks and basic school materials)

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