

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

DPR KOREA

DONOR UPDATE

8 DECEMBER 2006

UNICEF strongly advocates that the rights to survival and development of Korean children should not be negatively impacted as a result of UN sanctions and calls on donors to continue supporting essential basic social services for children

- Only 46 per cent of the funds appealed for in 2006 were met, seeking to sustain critical activities providing basic social services for children and women
- Additional funds, US\$1.5 million, are required immediately to ensure the continuation of programming activities at the start of 2007



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

1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

In the last few months the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has received significant attention after it consecutively conducted missile (July 2006) and nuclear (October 2006) tests which resulted in international condemnation and the voting of UN sanctions. In this context mobilizing resources to support basic social services in health, nutrition, water/sanitation and education for Korean children is a major challenge. **UNICEF strongly advocates that the rights to survival and development of Korean children who are victims of the on-going political turmoil and represent the future hope of the country should not be negatively impacted as a result of UN sanctions and calls on donors to continue supporting essential basic social services for children.**

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has an extensive network of basic social services. The marginal improvements in the economy over the last two-three years, however, did not translate into additional investments in the provision of these services for children and women. This has led to a general deterioration of infrastructure and especially shortages of essential medicines, medical consumables and other supplies. Child and maternal mortality rates have increased sharply since the early 1990s and malnutrition rates, while improved over the last decade, are still high by WHO standards. About 20 per cent of children under the age of two suffer from diarrhoeal diseases caused by contaminated water and poor hygiene practices. Shortages of textbooks, school materials and fuel for heating during the long sub-zero winters remain another concern. Learning methods have also not evolved in step with international standards. All these factors have combined to affect negatively the quality of education.

Severe flooding was experienced in four provinces in mid July. Though government estimates of damage to lives, houses and crop-land vary widely from that of international agencies, FAO has estimated a food deficit of about 1 million tons in the 2006/07 period¹, out of an estimated food need of 5 million tons. This situation is exacerbated due to steep falls in the multi-lateral and bi-lateral food aid to DPRK resulting from the political tensions and the decision to stop receiving emergency assistance in 2005. In this context the country is likely to face a severe food security crisis in 2007.

The current overall reduction of international assistance risks compromising the progress made over the past decade. By providing essential medicines and vaccines to protect children against common diseases, nutritional complements for malnourished children, iron/folic acid for women before pregnancy to prevent anemia and multi-micronutrients during pregnancy, clean water supply and other basic inputs for children, the UNICEF supported programmes have contributed to improving the lives of children, particularly the most vulnerable groups, such as young children and mothers. This needs to be sustained. There is a need, also, to strengthen both technical and managerial government capacity at all levels to further improve the quality of basic social services in health, nutrition, water/sanitation and education.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

Addressing malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies

Supplementation of multi-micronutrients targeting 270,000 (80 per cent of total) pregnant women during the first six months of pregnancy is continuing in the accessible² counties nationwide. Supplementation of iron/folic acid before pregnancy for prevention of anemia is on-going, targeting at about 225,883 women aged 23-28 years. 34,000 iodine oil capsules for pregnant women in high risk areas were distributed.

The production of locally produced blended food, a joint project between WFP and UNICEF, resumed in June 2006 with an aim to provide fortified food to 361,996 children attending nurseries and kindergartens, children in hospitals, and 52,896 pregnant and lactating women in 30 WFP focus counties, reflecting the reduction in number of target beneficiaries and geographical coverage. In 2006, it is estimated that 12,736 MT of fortified food will be produced.

A core group of six government trainers have received training in Singapore on child caring practice in September 2006. This group will then further train provincial and county caregivers.

¹ "Crop Prospects and Food Situation" FAO, October, 2006

² Out of 204 counties in DPRK, only 160 are accessible to international agencies. Except immunization and vitamin A which are supported nationwide, UNICEF assistance is provided only to those counties which are accessible.

In May during the first child health day of the year, 1.3 million children or 97 per cent of the target group received de-worming tablets and 1.98 million or 97 per cent of children aged between 6 months and 5 years old received vitamin A supplementation. The same group received the second dose of vitamin A and de-worming tablets during the second child health day in November. In addition a new leaflet with key messages on child care was developed and distributed to all families on that day.

A Family Book which provides comprehensive information to families on caring practices for young children and women before, during and after pregnancy was revised and re-printed in 270,000 copies and is currently being distributed to families through household doctors, health centers and nurseries. In Democratic People's Republic of Korea this type of communication material is very effective as all parents are literate and used to reading.

To support the treatment of malnutrition 360 staff of provincial hospitals have been trained in the proper management of severely malnourished children using the newly revised protocol. Therapeutic milk was also distributed to provincial pediatric and county hospitals where the great majority of malnourished children are referred.

Finally, emergency kits composed of essential drugs and medical materials covering three months were provided to 8 counties and 66 villages affected by floods. New emergency kits have since then been re-composed and are be stored at the central medical warehouse to maintain an emergency response capacity.

Maternal and child health

There are sufficient quantities of vaccines and devices up to March 2007. In order to further strengthen the immunization programme new cold chain systems were provided in 50 counties and 4,300 villages and 600 bicycles were distributed to vaccinators in South and North Hwanghe provinces. After a decade of stagnation, DPT3 coverage has reached more than 88 per cent at the end of third quarter. On 1 July 2006, a new combined vaccine (DTP+ HepatitisB) has been introduced nationally. The second multiyear plan (2007-2011) for EPI in DPRK has been developed.

During 2006, the Central Medical Warehouse (CMW) distributed more than 8000 medicine kits to 2,933 Ri (village) clinics/hospitals and district/county hospitals in six provinces and Pyongyang city and to 22 specialized pediatric and maternity hospitals nationwide. However, the number of items and quantity of medicines has been significantly reduced due to financial constraints.

A total of 4.6 million sachets of oral rehydration salts sachets (ORS) were produced locally between January and November 2006. The project is targeting 5 million sachets in 2006 or more than 60 per cent of the local needs. An assessment of the factory was conducted in September to look into the potential for increasing and improving local production of ORS.

The programme has continued support to further strengthen the logistic capacity of the Central Medical Warehouse and the Provincial Medical Warehouses, standardize the management of essential medicines, sustain regular quarterly medicine distribution, and upgrade the knowledge and skills of health staff on treatment of diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infection and delivery of immunization services.

In addition, two provincial medical warehouses were rehabilitated in the provinces of North and South Hwanghe. Ten intensive care units located in four provincial pediatric hospitals and six focus counties hospitals were rehabilitated and provided with relevant 13 items of equipment. The staff of these units will receive training in December 2006.

Printing of 300,000 sheets of partographs for use in monitoring the progress of labour and 300,000 ante-natal cards is completed. Additional midwifery kits for 150 rural clinics, as well as emergency obstetric care kits for seven focus county hospitals and four provincial hospitals have been delivered. 168 staff of provincial and focus counties received refresher training on reproductive health related topics.

An evaluation of the second phase and preparation of plans for the extension of Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) in two counties in North Hwanghae and South Pyongan provinces was conducted in September with the help of an external consultant from WHO regional office.

Access to safe water and improved sanitation

The water supply projects initiated in 2003 and 2004 for Hyesan, Hoeryong, Rinsan, Unryul and Yonsan counties were inaugurated in June 2006, benefiting about 320,000 people. Additional activities included installation of 60 deep water hand pumps in Unryul, Yontan and Yonsan counties at Ri level providing safe drinking water to childcare institutions benefiting 18,000 children; provision of spare parts and 158 tons of calcium hypochlorite for water treatment for 5 provincial capitals to maintain safe drinking water supply; construction materials, pipes, and cement to provide safe drinking water to 20,000 people in Yontan county; and portable water quality monitoring laboratory for Yontan county. In addition, in order to be ready for construction right after the cold winter months, the main pipes required to provide safe drinking water to 40,000 people in two focus counties are being procured and pre-positioned.

Capacity building efforts continue, including participation of two officials from the Ministry of City Management in a regional training on water management in Thailand, and provision of IT equipment to the Design Institute for gravity fed water supply system designs. An international consultant provided comprehensive training to 16 designers from national level and 3 provinces on gravity fed water supply system design through a hydraulic modeling software.

A comprehensive review of the Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme was completed under the technical guidance of an international consultant in cooperation with the Ministry of City Management. Several of its recommendations are already being implemented to improve the quality of the Programme. To further strengthen collaboration and exchange of experience between the ministry and stakeholders in the water sector, UNICEF staff supported the Ministry in conducting a technical assessment of the water and sanitation activities of the NGO Save the Children.

Finally 500 sets of family hygiene kits were distributed in three counties affected by floods and new improved kits have been ordered to maintain the Ministry's preparedness capacity.

Improving quality of education for children

The Ministry of Education presented its experience on a pilot learning assessment project at a regional meeting in Shanghai, showing positive outcomes. The project will be scaled up to cover provincial capitals using the Ministry's own resources. Further efforts are made to link the learning assessment project to education quality improvement, which will begin in the second half of the year. A workshop on curriculum revision focusing on mathematics was held in November and produced an initial plan for the revision of the mathematics curriculum of primary and secondary school over the next three years.

150 tons of printing papers for primary school text book were received and delivered. Other consumables for printing such as ink were ordered in July. Two kindergartens and 1 primary school in Unryul, Yontan and Yonsan counties have been partially rehabilitated as part of the winterization support. School furniture (desks and chairs etc) have been locally procured and distributed to 7 schools in 7 focus counties covering about 9,000 children.

The activity to develop hygiene promotion materials for use in schools as part of life skills based education has been initiated with technical assistance from a UNICEF regional advisor. Education material to strengthen hygiene promotion in primary school has been developed and is currently being printed in 5,000 copies to be piloted in 2007 in 10 focus county schools.

Finally in order to develop the ministry's preparedness in case of small scale emergencies, 20 emergency "school in the box" kits have been procured and will be stored at the Ministry.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Funding remains a constraint. In the absence of the Consolidated Emergency Appeal (CAP), UNICEF is seeking funds through the Humanitarian Action Report. To date, US\$ 5,193,003 or 46 per cent of the total requirement of US\$ 11,200,000 has been met. UNICEF would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Governments of Australia, Ireland, Norway, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Sweden as well as the German and French National Committees and Caritas Hong Kong, for their positive responses to support the programmes. The tables below show the current funding status of the requirements, by sector and donor.

TABLE 1: FUNDS RECEIVED AGAINST REQUIREMENTS BY SECTOR AS OF 7 DECEMBER, 2006				
Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector (US\$)	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet requirements	% Unfunded
Health and Nutrition	7,315,500	3,365,874	3,949,626	54
Water and Environmental Sanitation	3,184,500	1,821,378	1,363,122	43
Education	700,000	0	700,000	100
Total	11,200,000	5,187,252	6,012,748	54

TABLE 2: FUNDS RECEIVED BY DONOR		
Donor	Funds Received (US\$)	Sector
Australia	775,190	Water and Environment Sanitation
CARITAS Hong Kong	125,000	Nutrition
French National Committee	63,613	Nutrition
German National Committee	322,119	Nutrition
Ireland	320,513	Water and Environmental Sanitation
New Zealand	186,159	Health and Nutrition (safe motherhood, essential medicines)
Norway	195,181	Water and Environmental Sanitation
Republic of Korea	2,228,578	Health & Nutrition; Water and Environmental Sanitation
Sweden	970,899	Health & Nutrition; Water and Environmental Sanitation
Total	5,187,252	

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

About 46 per cent of funds were received up to November 2006, which has allowed the country office to implement some of the most crucial activities. **However due to the short fall UNICEF has not been able to implement a number of planned activities for 2006 and the start of 2007 will be very difficult without new contributions, especially in the field of health and nutrition for essential medicines, micronutrients, vaccines and medical equipment.** The table below outlines the most urgent priority requirements for the start of 2007 while awaiting the launch of the new Humanitarian Action Report for 2007:

Table 3: URGENT PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE START OF 2007		
Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Child Health: provision of essential medicines for one quarter	• More than 11 million people in seven provinces	800,000
2. Safe-motherhood : provision basic medical equipment for household doctors	• 100,000 families in five provinces	130,000
3. Expanded Programme on Immunization: vaccines for one quarter	• 100,000 Children under one year old • 100,000 Pregnant women	300,000
4. Replacement of one drilling rig for wells in child care institutions		120,000
5. Education: textbooks and basic school materials	• 600,000 girls and boys	150,000
Total Priority Needs		1,500,000

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

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