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Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

An estimated 10.9 million people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are affected by chronic food insecurity and lack of access to life-saving basic services, such as health care and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.¹ The drought and flooding that affected the country in 2018 will further exacerbate food insecurity in 2019. While survey data has shown a significant drop in stunting, from 28 per cent in 2012² to 19 per cent in 2017,³ one in every five children under 5 years is stunted and 3 per cent of children under 5 years are suffering from acute malnutrition.⁴ Increasingly stringent restrictions on UNICEF and partners, including scrutiny of in-country expenditures and requests by transit countries for sanction-related import waivers, are leading to considerable delays in the importation of life-saving relief items and have increased the costs of protracted storage arrangements. In addition, banking channels remain suspended. These factors have compounded the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in which the delivery of basic humanitarian interventions crucial to safeguarding the lives of children and women is already seriously compromised. Life-saving tuberculosis medicines, for example, are expected to run out by mid-2019.⁵

Humanitarian strategy

As the lead of the nutrition and WASH sector working groups and co-lead of health with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF is at the forefront of humanitarian response in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. To sustain the delivery of life-saving interventions, UNICEF will continue to work with partners to apply its three-pronged strategic approach of building the capacities of local service providers and caregivers; strengthening the timely and effective delivery of essential health, nutrition and WASH interventions, especially for children under 5 years and pregnant and lactating women; and providing basic and essential humanitarian supplies in line with global standards. UNICEF will also continue to apply an integrated approach to health, nutrition, WASH and social inclusion programming that will contribute to reducing maternal and under-five mortality, promoting early childhood development, addressing undernutrition among women and girls and facilitating equitable access to basic WASH services. Specific health and nutrition interventions will be developed to build community resilience in these areas.

Results from 2018

As of 31 October 2018, UNICEF had US\$5.2 million available against the US\$16.5 million appeal (31 per cent funded).⁶ Achievements in routine immunization were made possible by utilizing other sources of funding to reach more than 243,000 children under 1 year with measles vaccination. Savings in freight and health kits costs allowed additional procurement to extend coverage with essential medicines to some 2.9 million people. More than 1.5 million children received vitamin A supplementation, nearly 506,000 children under 5 years received multiple micronutrient powder and over 28,000 pregnant women received multiple micronutrient tablets for six months. Nationwide, 90 per cent of children under 5 years were screened for malnutrition during child health days and identified cases were treated for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). Despite these achievements, due to the United Nations Security Council sanctions, the implementation of some nutrition interventions and procurement of essential health equipment were challenged. Delays in clearing sanctioned items is hindering the timely completion of four gravity-fed systems meant to provide safe drinking water to over 61,000 people. Funding constraints also resulted in 95 per cent of pregnant and lactating women not being reached with micronutrient supplements during child health days.

Total people in need:
10.9 million⁷

Total children (<18) in need:
2.59 million⁸

Total people to be reached:
6 million⁹

Total children to be reached:
1.7 million

2019 programme targets:

Nutrition

- 70,000 children under 5 years suffering from wasting (30,000 with SAM and 40,000 with MAM with concurrent illnesses) treated through inpatient and outpatient therapeutic feeding programmes
- 1.6 million children under 5 years provided with micronutrient supplementation

Health

- 890,000 children under 5 years with diarrhoea treated with oral rehydration salts
- 6 million people accessing essential medicines
- 90,500 pregnant mothers in 50 counties accessing emergency obstetric neonatal care services

WASH

- 223,000 people provided with access to safe drinking water
- 50,000 people reached with hygiene and sanitation messages

	UNICEF 2018 targets	UNICEF total results
NUTRITION		
Children under 5 years suffering from SAM treated through inpatient and outpatient therapeutic feeding programmes	60,000	40,238
Children under 5 years provided with micronutrient supplementation (two doses of vitamin A during child health days)	1,600,000	1,516,435
HEALTH		
Children under 12 months accessed routine immunization ⁱ	355,000	243,315 ⁱⁱ
Pregnant women accessed two doses of tetanus-diphtheria immunization	362,000	244,854 ⁱⁱⁱ
Children with diarrhoea provided with life-saving essential drugs, including oral rehydration salts	800,000	420,520
People provided with essential drugs	2,500,000	2,965,000 ^{iv}
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE		
Emergency-affected populations provided with access to safe water as per agreed standards	60,000	55,825
People with access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene messages (including families of the 12,000 children with SAM)	40,000	11,911

Results are through 31 October 2018 unless otherwise noted.

ⁱ Funded through other resources.

ⁱⁱ Results are for the first, second and third quarters.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Due to the reduced cost of freight and kits, additional essential medicines kits were procured to extend coverage.

Funding requirements

In line with the inter-agency '2019 DPR Korea Needs and Priorities' document, UNICEF is requesting US\$19.5 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children in 2019. Overall humanitarian funding to UNICEF Democratic People's Republic of Korea has declined since 2015, and in 2018, the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal had a 69 per cent funding gap. In an increasingly scrutinized and restricted financial environment, without donor support, UNICEF will be unable to meet children's basic humanitarian needs, such as in WASH, and support life-saving interventions in health and nutrition in response to the country's undernutrition situation and recurrent disasters.

Sector	2019 requirements (US\$)
Nutrition	9,800,000
Health ¹⁰	3,900,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	5,800,000
Total	19,500,000

¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, '2019 DPR Korea Needs and Priorities' (draft), OCHA, 2018. The document is still under elaboration and is expected to be released in February 2019.

² Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012 National Nutrition Survey, March 2013.

³ Central Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 DPR Korea Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey', UNICEF, June 2018.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Global Drug Facility, 'Technical Assistance Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', October 2018.

⁶ Available funds include US\$4.98 million received against the 2018 appeal and US\$207,948 carried forward from the previous year.

⁷ 2019 DPR Korea Needs and Priorities' (draft).

⁸ As per the 2014 Socio-Economic Demographic Health Survey, 23.8 per cent of the population is under 18 years of age. Based on 23.8 per cent (percentage recalculated based on post-multiple indicator cluster survey analysis) of 10.9 million people in need, an estimated 2.5 million children are in need of humanitarian support.

⁹ This figure is based on the highest coverage programme target under the health response, which includes the entire under-five caseload (1.7 million) and the over-five population in need of food and nutrition assistance (4.2 million).

¹⁰ The funding requirement for the health response has decreased despite the significant increase in targets for the provision of essential drugs due to the significant decrease in the costs of freight and essential medicines kits.

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