

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

IN 2009



Core Country Data	
Population under 18 (thousands)	6,656
U5 mortality rate	55
Infant mortality rate	42
Maternal mortality ratio (2000–2007, reported)	110
Primary school enrolment ratio*	108
Primary school enrolment ratio for girls*	101
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	92
% population using improved drinking-water sources**	100
% U5 suffering moderate and severe underweight/stunting	23/37

Sources: *The State of the World's Children 2009*, *Ministry of Education data. Net figures not available. **Field observation indicates much lower coverage.

Malnutrition in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers continues to be a serious concern in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea following the impact of widespread flooding in 2007 and drastic reductions in food imports. UNICEF requires critical support from the international community to support basic social services in health and nutrition for over 2 million children under age five and 400,000 pregnant/lactating women.

Summary of UNICEF Emergency Needs for 2009*	
Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	7,500,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	4,500,000
Education	1,000,000
Total**	13,000,000

* Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other underfunded emergencies.

**The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. 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

Malnutrition in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers continues to be a serious concern in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The impact of widespread flooding in August 2007 further aggravated by drastic reductions in food imports from China and the Republic of Korea that traditionally meet a big chunk of such deficits created concern in the international community. In response to this situation and, based on a rapid food security assessment conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP), the US Government announced a large food assistance programme through WFP and a consortium of US NGOs.

Given the fluctuating political context, the availability and quality of basic social services for women and children continue to rely critically on support from the international community. Basic rights of Korean children remain compromised as a result of prolonged poverty, under-resourced health and education systems, decaying water and sanitation infrastructure, inadequate caring practices for young children and pregnant women and fragile food security.

UNICEF responded very quickly to the opening-up of three provinces where international agencies were not permitted access since the end of 2006. Immediately after the opening was announced, a UNICEF technical team led by the Representative, carrying four truck loads of essential medicines and nutritional supplements, initiated a 12-day visit in two of these provinces. An increase in the number of children suffering from varying degrees of acute malnutrition was noted in all the institutions visited during the mission. Humanitarian assistance, comprising essential medicines, therapeutic milk and nutritional paste, was thereafter re-established in the last quarter of 2008. These provinces, with an estimated under-five population of 220,000 children, which are among the most vulnerable in the country, will continue to need special attention.

UNICEF worked closely with partners in organizing a number of workshops on lessons learnt from the 2007 floods in order to strengthen preparedness and response to DPRK's recurrent natural calamities. As a result, prepositioning of emergency supplies was increased in locations identified as vulnerable from previous years.

As the broader political and security environment continues to be uncertain, the support that the UNICEF Country Office receives through the *Humanitarian Action Report (HAR)* is vital to its ability to continue responding to children's most urgent needs.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2008

In close collaboration with national and international partners, UNICEF has continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of women and children in the priority areas of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education. Despite some progress, these areas suffer from chronic shortages of material and financial resources due to the absence of the major investments and large-scale assistance necessary to the reduction of child and maternal mortality as well as malnutrition among children and women.

With UNICEF's assistance, vaccination coverage remained high at 94 per cent for all antigens, meaning that more than 400,000 children were fully immunized. Following the measles outbreak in 2007, the second dose of measles was introduced nationwide for all children aged 15 months. Moreover, 96 per cent of pregnant women received tetanus toxoid vaccine. Basic essential medicines for the treatment of common childhood diseases, including locally produced oral rehydration salts (ORS), continued to be provided to more than 2,000 health facilities, providing basic health services to a population of over 8.9 million. During two yearly 'Child Health Days', 95 per cent of the over 2 million children under age five in DPRK received vitamin A and deworming tablets together with information to their caregivers on the prevention and treatment of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections (ARI), which continue to be the leading causes of child morbidity and mortality in DPRK. To ensure quality of maternal health care, midwifery kits were provided for 144 rural clinics, and obstetric emergency kits for 15 county hospitals estimated to benefit over 7,500 deliveries.

In all accessible counties, over 300,000 pregnant women received multi-micronutrient supplementation during the first and second trimesters of pregnancy, and postpartum women received vitamin A supplementation during the first six weeks after delivery. Information, education and communication (IEC) materials on breastfeeding and complementary feeding were developed to reach women nationwide. An information package was also developed to provide newly wed couples with key information on family planning and care of women before and during pregnancy.

Gravity-fed water supply systems, initiated in 2007, were completed and are providing safe drinking water to nearly 100 per cent of the 72,000 residents in three county towns. Construction of water supply systems started in four new county towns to ensure access to safe drinking water to an additional 90,000 people. Water quality surveillance was strengthened in six provinces through training of technicians and delivery of water quality monitoring laboratories. Following the

2007 floods, around 1.5 million people benefited from emergency recovery measures, such as chlorination and repairs of flood-affected pump stations in 20 counties. In line with the International Year of Sanitation, over 10,000 people, representing over 60 per cent of the total residents of one county town, will benefit from the pilot construction of a decentralized wastewater treatment system. An estimated 8,000 schoolchildren in over 20 schools will get access to improved sanitation through the construction of latrine blocks complemented with life skills-based education focusing on hygiene and health promotion.

Basic materials were provided for the printing of school textbooks along with interventions aimed at improving the quality of education, such as teacher training and mathematics curriculum revision. The child-friendly school concept was gradually introduced to Ministry of Education officers and policy makers. New material on life skills education was produced benefiting more than 250,000 children in over 600 primary schools. In-service teachers' training centres are being equipped with libraries and learning materials benefiting around 10,000 teachers.

To strengthen emergency preparedness, UNICEF supported several sectoral lessons learnt workshops following the 2007 floods and led an inter-agency contingency planning exercise on flood response. As a result, critical supplies in the areas of health, nutrition, water supply and education have been prepositioned to face an emergency affecting 100,000 people.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2009

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, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Weekly inter-agency meetings exchange information among UN agencies and other partners.

Linkages of HAR with the Regular Programme

Although DPRK stopped being part of the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) in 2005, when Government called for development assistance to replace humanitarian assistance, UNICEF's Country Programme retains a significant humanitarian focus by providing direct support to basic services for women and children. In the absence of a CAP, humanitarian funds have therefore been secured mostly through the *Humanitarian Action Report (HAR)*.

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 implementing 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\$ 7,500,000)

For 2009, the overall goal is to minimize the impact of the ongoing crisis on the health and nutritional status of over 2 million children under age five and 400,000 pregnant women, through the following key activities:

At the national level

- Provide vaccines and cold-chain equipment to maintain a high immunization coverage of at least 94 per cent for all antigens for over 400,000 children under age one and pregnant women;
- Train 200 county staff and 400 commune-level staff in immunization services and cold chain;
- Provide essential drugs to over 3,000 health facilities covering a population of over 11 million;
- Provide supplies and training for the inpatient treatment of an estimated 10,000 severely malnourished children in paediatric and county hospitals in accessible counties;
- Conduct a nationwide nutrition survey including an urinary iodine deficiency assessment;
- Procure and distribute vitamin A and deworming tablets to over 2 million children under age five;
- Procure and distribute multi-micronutrients for over 300,000 pregnant women in accessible counties;
- Develop, print and disseminate promotional materials on breastfeeding, complementary feeding, key care practices and multi-micronutrients for families and newlywed couples, disseminated through health clinics and local authorities.

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 levels 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;
- Expand the pilot of community-based treatment of severe malnutrition to 10 counties.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (US\$ 4,500,000)

For 2009, the overall goal is to improve access to and utilization of safe drinking water and sanitation services and hygiene practices in selected communities, schools and health institutions. Some 200,000 people – including children in institutions, such as baby homes, nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools – will benefit from the following key interventions:

At the national level

- Update water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector emergency preparedness plans to meet immediate water and sanitation needs of the inter-agency contingency planning scenario of 100,000 flood-affected people;
- Train over 200 technicians and decision makers on water supply and sanitation technologies;
- Introduce and promote point-of-use water treatment technologies (ceramic filters) to meet immediate safe water supply needs of 10,000 families;
- Provide water treatment chemicals and spare parts for provision of safe water in provincial cities meeting the needs of 1 million people.

In selected focus counties

- Construct water supply systems in five county towns (four initiated in 2008 and one new in 2009) providing safe drinking water to nearly 100 per cent of residents, estimated at over 100,000 people;
- Improve rural water supply in 10 communes, benefiting an estimated population of 40,000 people;
- Finalize and assess the decentralized wastewater treatment pilot system in one focus county town addressing sanitation needs of 10,000 people and initiate replication in two counties.

Education (US\$ 1,000,000)

For 2009, the overall goal is to improve the quality of education. An estimated 250,000 children will benefit directly from the following key interventions:

At the national level

- Strengthen pre- and in-service teachers' training, focusing in particular on child-centred methodologies and learning outcome approaches;
- Provide technical assistance for the final stage of the revision of the mathematics curriculum, focusing on piloting new material and approaches;
- Revise school readiness standards and undertake content and age validation in urban, peri-urban and rural kindergartens and nurseries throughout the country;
- Strengthen life skills curriculum and learning aids through the production of new classroom materials on health and hygiene, traffic accident prevention and interpersonal communication;
- Provide printing consumables for the publication of textbooks in primary and secondary schools.

In selected focus counties

- Provide basic rehabilitation and equipments to in-service teachers' training centres at county level;
- 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 an estimated 320,000 children in 8,000 classrooms;
- Improve quality education through progressive introduction of child-friendly approaches in primary and secondary schools.