

# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA IN 2007



CORE COUNTRY DATA	
Population under 18 (thousands)	6,756
U5 mortality rate	55
Infant mortality rate	42*
Maternal mortality ratio (1990-2005, reported)	110
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	n/a
% U5 suffering from moderate and severe underweight	23

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2007*  
 \* Government data from 1999 indicate 23.  
 \*\* Ministry of Education data 2005, net figures not available.  
 \*\*\* Ministry of Public Health data 2005 indicate 82%.  
 \*\*\*\* Government data, but field observations indicate much lower coverage.

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2007	
Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	6,450,000
Water and environmental sanitation	2,600,000
Education	950,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>

\* 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

According to government figures, the infant mortality rate increased from 14 to 23 deaths per 1,000 live births and the under-five mortality rate from 27 to 55 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1993 and 1998. This increase in child mortality resulted from acute food shortages, combined with heightened morbidity and the reduced capacity of the health system to manage childhood illness caused by the lack of essential drugs and the degraded quality of water and sanitation systems. Though government statistics indicate that 100 per cent of the population have access to improved drinking water sources, field observations show that most of the piped systems are old, in very poor conditions and often contaminated. These systems also provide water very irregularly as they are in most cases pump-based and requiring fuel that is very scarce. As a result, the occurrence of diarrhoea is high, causing malnutrition and remaining, together with acute respiratory infections, the main cause of child deaths.

Considerable progress has been made in the area of child malnutrition over the last decade due to large-scale assistance provided by the international community. As documented in a nutrition survey conducted in 2004,<sup>1</sup> between 1998 and 2004, acute malnutrition fell from 16 to 7 per cent, chronic malnutrition from 62 to 37 per cent and underweight from 60 to 23 per cent. Despite these positive trends, current levels of malnutrition are still high by WHO standards. Moreover, one third of mothers were found to be malnourished and anaemic, as was the case in 2002. Assistance to vulnerable groups, such as young children and mothers, needs to be sustained.

Primary and secondary schooling is free and compulsory. 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. These factors have combined to affect negatively the quality of education.

Weak managerial capacity of government counterparts involved in the provision of basic health, water and education services has constrained progress on delivery of inputs and project implementation, highlighting the need to pursue capacity-building efforts.

## 2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

In close collaboration with local, national and international partners, UNICEF has continued to respond to the needs of the population affected by the adverse situation. It has mainly focused on the priority areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and education. However, progress was hindered as the country lacks the major investments needed to achieve targets in areas such as child mortality and maternal health.

In health and nutrition, routine immunization services have been maintained, DPT3 coverage has reached 82 per cent, and more than 90 per cent of children under one year old have been immunized against tuberculosis, polio, measles and hepatitis B. With the support of the GAVI Alliance, a new combined vaccine (DPT-hepB) was introduced nationally and an expanded programme on immunization (EPI) multi-year plan was developed for 2007-2011.

Some 5,000 EPI caregivers were trained in the proper handling of vaccines; 500 section doctors received section doctor bags to strengthen antenatal, natal and postnatal care services; operation theatres were rehabilitated and equipped in five provincial maternity hospitals; 2,800 health facilities, covering around 60 per cent of the population, benefited from a regular supply of essential drugs, and the health facilities, covering the remaining 40 per cent of the population,

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<sup>1</sup> DPRK 2004 Nutrition Assessment, DPRK Central Bureau of Statistics and Institute of Child Nutrition with UNICEF/WFP support.

were supported by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); continued support was given for the local production of oral rehydration salts; some 3,000 health caregivers were trained in proper diagnosis and treatment of diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory tract infections; about 2 million under-five children received vitamin A supplementation, and almost 97 per cent of children aged 2-5 years received de-worming tablets through National Health Days; the protocol for the management of severe malnutrition was upgraded and key staff trained on the subject.

The new WHO growth chart was adopted and will be used as a pilot project in selected facilities. The *Family Book*, a Korean booklet inspired from the UNICEF publication *Facts for Life*, was updated and 250,000 copies distributed among communities to increase awareness on key caring practices for children and women.

In water and sanitation, during 2006 some 3.5 million people in provincial cities and focus counties gained access to clean drinking water and to more regular water supply through the construction of gravity-fed systems, the drilling of handpump wells and the provision of spare parts and chemical treatment materials. Some 10,000 children in 20 child-care institutions benefited from upgraded sanitation facilities. The capacity of the Ministry of City Management staff in designing and implementing gravity-fed water supply systems was enhanced through the in-depth training of 15 counterparts from the central level and from all nine provinces, as well as through hands-on experience in four focus counties. The scaling-up of this water supply technology is critical as it is well suited to the abundance of water sources in the many mountainous areas of the country and constitutes a more sustainable alternative than pump-based systems which require fuel.

UNICEF is really the only agency providing significant support in the area of education. Paper and printing press spare parts were provided to print basic textbooks for some 100,000 schoolchildren. In seven focus counties where UNICEF is promoting a better learning environment, over 7,000 children in seven schools received new school furniture. The learning assessment project was completed successfully in 20 pilot schools and will be expanded throughout the country with government's own resources. Activities to improve hygiene and to introduce life skills-based education in the primary and secondary curriculum have begun with the production of a colourful manual on health and hygiene promotion for primary schools.

### 3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2007

#### **Coordination and partnership**

Inter-agency theme groups comprising UN agencies, development partners and government meet monthly to discuss progress, issues, plans and strategies. Weekly inter-agency meetings exchange information among UN agencies and other development partners.

#### **Regular programme**

The Country Programme benefited from generous contributions, mostly through the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) until 2005 when the Government called for an end to the humanitarian assistance to move to development. In the absence of the CAP, funds have been secured through the *Humanitarian Action Report (HAR)*. Continuing fundraising through the HAR will ensure that the programme can maintain the progress already made and also further improve the quality of selected services. This includes responding to the immediate needs of children and addressing some of the underlying causes of the situation through the implementation of a comprehensive approach to early childhood care and a cross-cutting strategy of capacity-building.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UNICEF is implementing a two-tier system of national and focus county interventions. At the national level, UNICEF will support the capacity-building of government counterparts to provide basic social services, formulate or strengthen policies and guidelines and implement national programmes, such as immunization, de-worming and vitamin A supplementation. In a limited number of 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 Government's own or external resources that might be available in the future.

### Health and nutrition (US\$ 6,450,000)

All children, especially under-five children, will benefit from the following key interventions:

#### *At the national level*

- Maintain high immunization coverage (more than 90 per cent) for all antigens;
- Extend cooperation with the GAVI Alliance and other partners to sustain the achievements of immunization and the integration of additional health interventions;
- Continue procuring and distributing essential medicine kits to more than 2,800 health facilities covering about 14 million people;
- Develop, in collaboration with WHO and IFRC, a strategy for scaling down the procurement of essential drugs over the next three years;
- Support local production of oral rehydration salts for the treatment of childhood diarrhoea, with the aim to increase the yearly production to 7 million sachets (about 90 per cent of local needs);
- Provide nutritional supplementation to all pregnant women (estimated at 300,000), iron/folic acid to women before pregnancy, multi-micronutrients to pregnant women during the first six months of pregnancy, and vitamin A to women after delivery;
- Procure and distribute vitamin A and de-worming tablets two times a year to all under-five children (estimated at 2 million);
- Administer de-worming tablets to 3 million primary schoolchildren;
- Print and disseminate at least 250,000 additional copies of the *Family Book* (Korean version of *Facts for Life*) to increase awareness on caring practices for children and women;
- Assess the situation of salt iodization and increase production of iodized salt;
- Support growth monitoring in all child-care institutions.

#### *In selected focus counties*

- Support the promotion of a range of feeding and care practices both in nurseries and at the household level in 10 focus counties;
- Expand the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) model in at least three focus counties;
- Strengthen the health management information system (HMIS) in 10 focus counties;
- Implement the new WHO growth chart in selected counties;
- Develop a pilot project to provide newlywed couples with a package of information on their upcoming responsibilities and roles as parents, including caring practices for young children, caring practices for women before, during and after pregnancies and HIV/AIDS awareness;
- Procure vitamins and minerals to produce, in partnership with WFP, around 36,000 MT of blended foods to be distributed to child-care institutions and to pregnant and lactating women in 30 counties.

### **Water and environmental sanitation (US\$ 2,600,000)**

Some 5 million 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***

- Procure water treatment chemicals and spare parts to provide safe water to 5 million people in urban areas;
- Train 1,000 water engineers and technicians nationwide on the design, operation and management of gravity-fed water supply systems.

#### ***In selected focus counties***

- Consolidate the gravity-fed water supply system construction experience into manuals to be used for national training;
- Rehabilitate/construct water supply systems in two focus counties to provide safe drinking water to 80,000 people through gravity-fed systems;
- Rehabilitate water and sanitation facilities in 20 child-care institutions benefiting 10,000 children;
- Construct demonstration household latrines and support household hygiene promotion in 10 focus counties;
- Provide potable water quality monitoring laboratories to two anti-epidemiological stations in focus counties to upgrade their monitoring capacity;
- Provide safe drinking water to 30,000 children in child-care institutions at village level through the installation of 100 borehole handpump wells;
- Promote hygiene education in 50 schools where water supply and sanitation facilities have been upgraded.

### **Education (US\$ 950,000)**

A total of 200,000 children will benefit directly from the following key interventions:

#### ***At the national level***

- Supply basic school materials including 150 tons of papers to print textbooks benefiting 150,000 children in primary schools and kindergartens nationwide;
- Increase technical skills of 50 Ministry of Education officials on expanding learning assessment pilot and developing other initiatives such as curriculum revision, in-service teacher training and life skills-based education, with a focus on health and hygiene.

#### ***In selected focus counties***

- Provide comprehensive rehabilitation for at least five primary schools/kindergartens in focus counties with double-glazed windows, upgraded kitchens and water and sanitation facilities benefiting about 10,000 children, including provision of basic education supplies, such as desks and chairs;
- Pilot quality-related activities on curriculum revision, in-service teacher training and life skills-based education in 20 schools upon which experience will be provided to national education policy makers.