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OCHA OFFICE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

DPR KOREA: SITUATION BULLETIN

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Contributions for the March 2004 Bulletin should be sent to OCHA no later than 2 April 2004.

WFP CEREAL DISTRIBUTIONS ALL BUT HALTED, THEN PARTIALLY RESUMED

With its stocks all but exhausted, WFP was obliged to suspend cereal distributions to almost all of its 4 million "core" beneficiaries (except 75,000 child-bearing women and 8,000 children in orphanages and hospitals) at the beginning of the month. Little of the 77,000 MT of commodities (mostly cereals) previously pledged were scheduled to be available for consumption before April. As a result, most of the vulnerable North Koreans WFP seeks to support were set to be deprived of vital, supplemental cereal rations in February and March - two of the coldest months of the year, when more calories, not less, are needed.

The unprecedented cereal shortfall also forced WFP to drastically scale down food-for-work activities planned for the spring and threatened the closure of factories producing enriched foods for millions of malnourished children and women. Reduced donations have left WFP unable to feed many of its targeted recipients for much of the past two years, jeopardizing hard-won gains made in improving nutritional standards since the late 1990s.

The agency's 2004 operation for the DPRK sought 485,000 MT of commodities valued at USD 171 million. It targets North Koreans most affected by lack of dietary balance and those who have no means of meeting their minimum caloric or micro-nutrient requirements. It also aims to assist households worst affected by an economic adjustment process launched in mid-2002.

Working on several fronts to try to bridge the immediate shortfall, WFP succeeded in resuming cereal distributions to 2.7 million core beneficiaries from 20 February. Short-term measures including borrowings will allow cereal distributions to most core beneficiaries to continue into April. Nonetheless, 1.5 million core beneficiaries will not receive WFP cereal rations during this period.

The solution is temporary as well as partial: the February-April gap is essentially being reduced by borrowings which must be repaid as soon as possible from future contributions to WFP's DPRK operation.

Some of the donations pledged following an urgent WFP appeal on 9 February - by Germany, New Zealand, Canada, Norway and Finland - will be used to help reimburse the borrowings. The expected arrival in April and May of shipments from other donors, including the United States, the European Commission and Australia, will enable all but 600,000 core beneficiaries receive WFP cereal rations for some two months. Distribution cuts will again affect 1 million core beneficiaries in June, and, by September, the number will rise to 2.9 million. There are almost no cereals in the pipeline for the second half of the year.

OCHA HDRC WEBSITE

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/dprk>

The HDRC website is a web-portal aiming to provide an online platform for information exchange for all humanitarian and development actors in DPR Korea.

CONCERN IN DPRK: AN OVERVIEW

Following the successful completion of Concerns water and sanitation project in Pukchang county, South Pyongan province during 2002/2003, two smaller but more focused projects are being undertaken. One, funded through the Development Corporation of Ireland (DCI), targets Pukchang's neighbouring county, Dokchon giving the opportunity to continue working in one farm in Pukchang in order to build on the relationships formed there through the previous project. The second, still in South Pyongan, targets the county of Hoichang, and is funded through ECHO. The anticipated beneficiaries of these projects total approximately 57,000 in Dokchon and Pukchang (including 7,000 rural beneficiaries) and 36,000 in Hoichang (including 6,000 rural beneficiaries).

Both projects aim to address six areas of importance in the water and sanitation sector. Rehabilitation of the urban water distribution system in both counties is necessary as pumping capacities of the current equipment are severely reduced due to the age of the equipment and a lack of spare parts. Five rural community farms have been identified for construction or rehabilitation of water distribution networks in a selection of work teams. The majority of these will be gravity fed systems although the location of some areas requires a pumped system to be installed. Procurement of the materials for both the urban and the rural systems has begun.

Sanitation will be addressed through the construction of block latrines in several institutions (schools and hospitals) in each county. It is also hoped that the concept of composting latrines – a method of sanitation that will reduce the dangers of fresh waste being distributed on agricultural land – can be suitably adapted to the local situation and implemented on a household level. The physical sanitation component will be complemented by various health and hygiene activities. Health promotion workshops, in collaboration with the National Society of the Red Cross, aimed at training health promoters and teachers, will be held in each identified community farm as well as the main town in each county. These will provide participants with basic information on water (e.g. correct use, storage, diseases) and sanitation practices (e.g. hand washing) suitable to communicate to the sectors of the population with which they work. These workshops have just begun and will run through March and April.

The distribution of education and hygiene materials through the schools, in the form of soap, teaching flipcharts, posters, and t-shirts with basic hygiene messages, will supplement both the workshops and the water and sanitation construction aspects of the projects. Finally an improvement to the capacity of the local and central anti-epidemic stations (AES's) is sought through the provision of water quality testing equipment and consumables, and the provision of training on basic methods of water quality sampling and analysis. This area of the projects will be supplemented by funding from Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA).

In the Food Security sector, Concern is implementing a project which combines the provision of Fuelwood and Fodder, as in previous years, with the issue of Sloping Land Management. This project will operate in nine counties of South Pyongan and one county of North Pyongan Province.

A pilot Greenhouse project is on going in three of the more mountainous counties. This will assist in the propagation of saplings in the nurseries.

A new tree will be introduced this year to the tree nurseries in our project area – the Seabuckthorn. The properties of this hardy tree should be of great benefit in the production of fuelwood and fodder.

The Ministry of Land Management and Environmental Protection have agreed to the establishment of 15ha of dynamic terraces in Concern's project areas. These areas will be monitored throughout the year to ascertain their effectiveness in reducing erosion.

In March, a Green table presentation was organised by Concern and Triangle at SDC. The Environmental/Agricultural/Energy sector group participated in this discussion to exchange ideas and information on environmental issues. A representative from the Ministry of Land Management and Environmental Protection also participated.

We expect a visit from a Technical Advisor in March. He is currently working with Concern in Cambodia on community forestry and we hope that this visit will be beneficial to both country programmes.

Ongoing work includes the planning of tree nursery management, continuing afforestation plans and the ongoing design of irrigation systems in the tree nurseries.

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HEALTH AND NUTRITION

WHO STRENGTHENS ITS COUNTRY OFFICE IN PYONGYANG

WHO has been present in Pyongyang since 1997, and its Emergency and Humanitarian Action office was replaced by a permanent WHO office in 2001 with Dr. Eigil Sorensen as the first WHO Representative. Last year WHO updated the Country Cooperation Strategy for DPRK. This is the strategic framework for the organization's work in the country for the next four years.

The Country Cooperation Strategy suggested the need to strengthen the technical capacity of the WHO office with three additional international technical staff. Two new international medical officers are joining WHO Pyongyang in March. One medical officer will be responsible for Communicable Disease Control, in particular tuberculosis and malaria, and the second one for Family and Community Health, including maternal and child health, reproductive health, and essential medicines. The WHO country office also have four National Program Officers (NPO), three being medical doctors. WHO would like to increase the number of NPOs, initially with one NPO (Family and Community Health). The increased number of technical staff will provide new opportunities for providing better technical support to the country and add force to the implementation of WHO programs in DPRK.

INSUFFICIENT FUNDING OF WHO'S PROGRAMS IN DPRK

So far WHO has received only 28% of the UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for 2004, asking for about USD 6 million for its health programs in DPRK. The projects in the CAP 2004 including early detection and control of diseases outbreaks including SARS, strengthen the control of malaria, HIV/AIDS, improving laboratory services at local level, tuberculosis, upgrading Blood Transfusion Services, essential medicines for vulnerable groups and strengthening of health services at the community level. Many of the planned activities will have to be canceled if no more funding is forthcoming.

Being the lead international public health agency, WHO has a good track record showing significant reduction and malaria over the last two-three years. Furthermore, the DOTS expansion now is providing adequate handling of suspected and confirmed tuberculosis cases throughout the country. WHO is involved in many others areas of the health sector. The country office in Pyongyang also provides technical advice to NGOs and other international agencies on what are the priority areas for health sector support and what appropriate international assistance is. WHO is actively seeking additional for funds from donors to prevent planned activities from being cancelled.

UNICEF - PROTOCOLS ON MICRONUTRIENT SUPPLEMENTATION DRAFTED AND SHARED WITH THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

In DPRK, the result of the further analysis on the 2002 Nutrition Assessment indicated a significant association between maternal nutritional status and child stunting. The 2002 Nutrition Assessment reported about one third of mothers of children under two years in DPRK have either anemia and/or low body mass as predicated by low mid-

upper arm circumference. These women are likely to be micronutrient deficient because of the seasonal availability of fruits and the relatively high cost of protein/micronutrient-rich foods (i.e. fish, lentils), or because of diets that inhibit micronutrients absorption. In February 2004 UNICEF drafted and shared 2 protocols on micronutrient supplementation with the Ministry of Public Health, as a means to improve the nutritional status of women before and during pregnancy.

PROTOCOL ON IRON SUPPLEMENTATION BEFORE PREGNANCY AND TREATMENT OF IRON DEFICIENCY / ANAEMIA

It has been recognized internationally that maternal nutrition during peri-conceptual period and pregnancy is the key factor for survival, growth, and development of young children and their ultimate adult stature. Anemia during this period becomes a key element in the process, as a marker of maternal wellbeing and status, and a key factor in maternal mortality and child growth and cognitive function.

The MoPH in DPRK will finalize the protocol of iron/folic acid supplementation before pregnancy to ensure that all women enter the important condition of pregnancy for the optimal foetal growth and development, and pregnancy outcome.

PROTOCOL ON MULTIMICRONUTRIENT SUPPLEMENTATION DURING PREGNANCY

There is growing recognition that the multi-micronutrient status of mothers has profound influences on a wide spectrum of birth outcomes. The nutritional status of the mother and the quality of the diet during pregnancy, during the peri-conceptual period, is closely related to stunting in infancy. Furthermore, the demands of lactation impose even greater demands on the diet of mothers after birth, and translate into breast-milk that may not have optimal levels of water soluble micronutrients. Improved quality of the maternal diet/or multi-micronutrient supplements during pregnancy will have multiple benefits to both the mother and the child.

UNICEF – ESSENTIAL MEDICINES UPDATE

In February, essential medicines were delivered to 250 ri clinics / hospitals and 24 provincial / county hospitals in the provinces of North Hwanghae , Jaggang , North Pyongyan and South Pyongyan, ensuring that these clinics and hospitals are able to treat the most common illnesses of children like diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory tract infections.

UNICEF - SUPPLYING VITAMIN AND MINERAL PREMIX FOR THE PRODUCTION OF BLENDED FOOD

In February, 10 metric tonnes vitamin and mineral premix were provided for the production of blended food. Furthermore, 83.2 metric tonnes of premix was in procurement process in order to meet the requirement of blended food until July 2004.



ADRA – COMPLETES REHABILITATION OF SARIWON PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

On the 30th of December 2003 ADRA completed the Sariwon Paediatric Hospital Rehabilitation Project, ensuring that the Sariwon population will experience an improvement in the delivery of paediatric health care services.

Sariwon Paediatric Hospital serves 16 districts and a population of approximately 500,000 children and adolescents under 17 years of age.

The hospital buildings were initially constructed soon after the war in the 1950's. Despite some renovations having taken place since that time, conditions during the initial assessment were found to be well below the minimum standards in a number of areas. Internal temperatures in winter could drop to as low as -12°C as the floor delivered heating had been rendered redundant by a shortage in coal supplies. The buildings revealed an urgent need for renovation with sagging ceilings, ill-fitting doors and windows, and internal dampness during winter. The hospital had not had any interior running water since 1996, and at the time of the assessment two hand drawn wells supplied all fresh water requirements to the facility.

The assessment visit indicated that despite the degree of hardship, lack of supplies, and faulty or obsolete equipment, the staff of this hospital employed a high level of ingenuity in an attempt to continue to provide health care services to the provincial population.

In order to improve the quality of provincial health care services, ADRA and the hospital's administration agreed that two priority issues would need to be addressed: postoperative infection rates would need to be significantly reduced through the construction of a new operating theatre and the installation of new surgical equipment, and; general inpatient health services should be improved by rehabilitating medical and surgical wards including new roofing, ceilings, doors, windows, wall and roof insulation, heating system, new electricity installation, internal running water, and examination and treatment rooms.

The hospital returned to full operation on the 5th of January 2004 and the WFP is now overseeing ongoing food supply needs, however, this project has highlighted many of the related health care system issues that require urgent attention. ADRA has developed partnerships for further interventions targeting facilities and services at the county level – the primary referral point for provincial hospitals such as Sariwon – with one such project included in the 2004 CAP, however promoting a funding priority for this sector has proven challenging. In an attempt to address these challenges, ADRA has undertaken a review of its Hospital and Health strategy designing a program that will ensure that limited resources are directed to the most urgent needs in a manner that can be easily replicated across the country.

Despite these challenges and with reference to the projects already completed, it is now evident that the elevated standard of health care facilities in this province is resulting in an improvement in health care services – ultimately leading to a tangible improvement in health care outcomes within the provincial population.

AMERICARES CONTINUES TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES

AmeriCares staff visited DPRK during February to partially distribute a shipment of medicines and medical supplies that recently arrived. The medicines and supplies will be divided up between the Pyongyang Medical University Hospital, and the Provincial Pediatric Hospitals, Children's and Baby Homes in North Hwanghae and South Pyongan Provinces. AmeriCares is also providing Korean PDR descriptions for most of the medicines, as well as Korean descriptions of some of the medical supplies.

IFRC – HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES

As for the 2004 Appeal, the provision of the medical materials to the health institutions and of the updated knowledge on several health-related subjects has started from the beginning of the year.

On January 12th, 1100 Household doctor kits supported by the German Government through the German Red Cross Society arrived at Nampo port much later than expected.

All the kits were distributed and monitored by the IFRC delegates and DPRK Red Cross Society health staff of the end of January. The German Ambassador to the DPRK with the Polish Ambassador visited some health institutions which had received the German HH doctor kits.

All the medical drugs and equipments including 5635 Basic kits for 1st quarter, another 1000 Household doctor kits from the Finnish Red Cross Society, 150 Safe delivery kits and 310 First Aid Refill kits were distributed from the end of December to mid January.

Coal of 4023 MT was procured locally, distributed to the 32 selected health institutions and monitored by the IFRC delegates and DPRK Red Cross Society Staff in January and February. The quality was highly appreciated by the local people and the coal will be used in January – March.

As spring has come and the warmer weather is favourable for doing workshops, training has started with ToT (Training of Trainers). Refresher workshop on Community Based First Aid and the Aseptic workshop for midwives and nurses from the 24th of February. In March, workshops will be conducted on the prevention of malaria and water born diseases.

AFMAL

In February 2004 AFMAL has accomplished a six month health project in Hoeryong Maternity Hospital in Osadok-dong of Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province. The overall objective of the project, funded by ECHO, was to provide the means to restore the surgical activities within the Hoeryong Maternity Hospital for the Gynaecology Department.

Significant achievements in the project are:

- Rehabilitation of surgical block of Hoeryong Maternity Hospital Gynaecology Department.
- Supply and instalment of the surgical and diagnostic equipment in Hoeryong Hospital. The instalment of the equipment, as well as the subsequent technical training course, were undertaken by two Italian



expatriates; one Biomedical Engineer and a Medical Equipment technician.

Medical training on using the newly installed equipment was held in Pyongyang from 23 to 27 February 2004. Two doctors from Hoeryong Maternity Hospital received medical training on surgery methods, the utilisation of the Electro surgery unit, and anaesthetic methods with the utilisation of an anaesthetic machine. This training was located at the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital and was held by a Specialist of Pyongyang Maternity Hospital under the supervision of Prof. Nicola PIROZZI, Chief of Emergency Department in the Hospital "BAMBINO GESU" of Rome.

In the same period the two doctors of Hoeryong Maternity Hospital have assisted the Maternal and Neonatal Intensive Care training course held in Pyongyang Maternity Hospital by Prof. Nicola PIROZZI, from the Hospital BAMBINO GESU of Rome.

28 obstetricians, gynaecologist and paediatricians from all DRPK Hospitals have participated in the training course. The local community and Health authorities have fully supported the project activities, facilitating achievement of the tasks.

AFMAL - FATEBENEFRAPELLI wishes to thank the precious collaboration of ECHO office in Pyongyang and the collaboration of World Food Program that has made it possible to distribute food and relief items to the workers responsible for the Hoeryong Maternity Hospital surgery block rehabilitation, within the framework of a "Food for Work" program. Because of the successful outputs of this project, AFMAL - FATEBENEFRAPELLI is committed to continue the humanitarian activities in North Hamgyong Province.

AFMAL - FATEBENEFRAPELLI, with the support of the OCHA NGO Funding Mechanism, will undertake an emergency project on the County Hospital N. 1 in Osadok-dong of Hoeryong City. The project aims to strengthen the health service facilities available for the population in Osadok-dong Province.

WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

IFRC Update

Monitoring continued on the delivered watsan material, cement and iron bars delivered to 30 communities included in the ECHO Netherlands Red Cross financed program. From 18-28 February, a review team of two people visited 21 locations in North and South Pyongan provinces where IFRC - DPRK RC watsan programs have been implemented since 1999. The review team also meet representatives from other organisations working with water and sanitation in DPRK as well as authorities in DPRK and also diplomatic representatives. Material for the sanitation part in the program has been ordered and is expected to arrive in the country in March.

IFRC Receives Funds for Water Supply and Sanitation

Funds for the rehabilitation/construction of water supply systems and sanitation facilities in Hyesan city (Ryanggang province) and Hoeryong city (North Hamgyong province) have been received. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2004, and benefit about 300,000

people, of which about 50,000 are children in hospitals, schools and child care institutions.

In addition, funds for the rehabilitation/construction of rural water supply systems and household latrines in selected ris in Kosan, Kowon, Jongpyong and Yonsan counties were also received. This project is expected to be completed by the end of 2004 and provide an additional 200,000 people with access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines.



The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organization for education & cultural relations. It provides access to British ideas, experience in education & training, books & periodicals, the English language, the arts, the sciences & technology.

The British Council is represented in 229 cities & towns in 110 countries. The English Language Teacher Development Project in Pyongyang is funded by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office & is the only collaborative educational project funded by the UK in the DPRK.

The DPRK Ministry of Education first invited Lecturers to Kim Il Sung University & the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies in September 2000. A third university, Kim Hyong Jik University of Education, joined the project in September 2001.

The English Language Teaching Specialists are primarily responsible for English Language Teacher Development, or Teacher Training, Courses in the three tertiary institutions which are members of the project. The ELT Specialists also provide assistance with curriculum development, providing knowledge of the theories which underpin the communicative methodology. They also deliver communicatively-based English language courses to undergraduate students in their respective institutions. In addition, the ELT Specialists give lectures in British Studies to both undergraduate students & to departmental staff in the universities.

Some In-Service Teacher Training is also provided for local schoolteachers from Pyongyang & lecturers from provincial universities.

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IFRC – DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Norwegian Red Cross Delegation visits the DPRK

As part of the Federation appeal 2004, the DPRK RC has started tree planting project in collaboration with the Norwegian Red Cross. A delegation composed of the Head of the Disaster Management Unit, DPRK Programme Officer and a Forester visited the DPRK from 24 to 2 March. Mr. Tormod Stavrum, the Forester, will leave the country on 9 March. The purpose of the visit was to acquaint himself with the current humanitarian situation in the country and meet with the DPRK RC and Federation delegation to discuss issues related to the on-going Federation-supported programmes as well as bilateral projects with the DPRK RCS.

The delegation visited hospitals, clinics, water/sanitation project sites, tree nurseries, etc., in several cities and counties. One of the issues discussed was the reforestation project. The Norcross is currently supporting five tree nurseries, including two in Pyongyang and the remaining three in Kujang, Unjon and Jongju. Mr. Stavrum visited all nurseries and checked the delivery of tractors, sunshades, irrigation systems, as well as the water pools they dug. He also conducted training for nursery staff, particularly with issues relating to the seedling production.

AGRICULTURE

FAO - Update

Winter Wheat, sown in late-Autumn 2003, has emerged in recent weeks. Normally this takes place around 10 March. Preparations, in the lowlands, are well under way for Spring Barley and Potato planting in the coming weeks. Also for the main cereals being propagated initially in nursery seedbeds. Under the Government's double-cropping programme, FAO has supplied some 2024 tonnes of urea to cultivate some 13,491 hectares of Spring Barley in 324 cooperative farms, in 51 counties along the western plains "Cereal Bowl" region comprising arable areas of North and South Hwanghae, North and South Pyongan, and Pyongyang. This fertiliser component was funded by Norway through the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and is implemented in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture. Both lowlands and mountain provinces are still experiencing ground frosts: the latter will do so for another two months, limiting their growing season and choice of food crops.

The fertiliser input is supplemented this growing season by an additional consignment of fertiliser for irrigated paddy rice crop, the provision of green manure seed and mobile threshers to co-op farms in the same provinces. Plastic sheeting, construction materials, tools and equipment are being procured for our new horticulture programme. Funding has come from Norway, Finland and Sweden in response to the CAP.

FAO - CAP 2004

FAO appealed for US\$3.5 million for four project proposals consisting of continued support to double cropping, also horticulture and programme coordination. Generous and timely response from the Government of Norway, with a

total donation of 6m Norwegian Krona (approx US\$860.000), likewise from Sweden (SIDA) contributing 8m Swedish Krona (approx US\$1.09m) and from the Government of Finland with 350.000 euro (approx US\$433.685). Total donations amount to roughly US\$2.383.685, or 68 per cent of requirements met.

FAO - Avian Influenza ("Bird Flu")

Although no cases have as yet been reported in DPR Korea, the situation in the east Asia region has reached crisis level. Numerous cases of the spread of various strains of the H5N1 virus were recorded in China, South Korea and many other neighboring states: where millions of chickens, ducks etc in commercial poultry units have been culled. Instances of fatal transmission to humans have been reported from Thailand and elsewhere. FAO has collaborated locally with WHO, with Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Services and Ministry of Public Health on awareness and preparedness. A sub-regional project (involving North and South Korea, China and Mongolia) has been funded that will raise local capacity to handle laboratory investigations to identify the virus.

FAO efforts in east Asia have been coordinated by Hans Wagner, Regional Animal Production Officer, Bangkok: who is currently visiting DPR Korea (9-16 March) who will meet with various Government officials and will brief the Agriculture Sector Group's monthly meeting on the Avian Flu crisis. Updates of AIDE News have been sent electronically to members of the ad-hoc Group, however it is possible to access additional information on <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/home.html>.

Agriculture Sector Group

This Sector Group held meetings in January and February. Information summaries are being prepared and will be available soon on the OCHA website <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/dprk> under FAO. Participants of this ad-hoc Group include German Agro Action, CESVI, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), Campus fur Christus, IFRC, PMU Interlife, EU-FSU, UNDP, WFP and UNICEF. Next meeting will be on Friday 12 March 2004, at 14:30 hrs in the OCHA Meeting Room. Further monthly afternoon meetings will be held on the second Friday, to facilitate those persons involved with field work, Mondays-Thursdays.

A provisional list of dates was circulated for both resident and non-resident organisations, as the latter maintain regular contact with the Group's Focal Point (Mike Stapleton, FAO) and sometimes plan their trips to Pyongyang so as to include participation at a Sector Meeting. These, as a reminder are:

Fridays 9 April, 14 May, 11 June, 9 July, 13 August, 10 September, 8 October, 12 November and 10 December 2004.

FAO, as Focal Point, remains in touch with all the previous members, also some intending new members, of the Agriculture Sector Group, with a view to outlining plans for 2004. These include developing a data base, in conjunction with OCHA, for all sharable information on agencies' and organisations' agricultural operations in DPR Korea.

**MERCY CORPS APPLE TREE PROJECT FOSTERS SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN DPRK**

Portland, OR - An Air China cargo plane left Portland International Airport yesterday for Pyongyang, North Korea loaded with 73 boxes carrying 100,000 high-quality apple tree rootstocks as part of Mercy Corps' ongoing Apple Tree Project. Launched in 2000, the Apple Tree Project has been recognized as a model program for sustainable agricultural development in that country.

"This shipment of rootstocks will allow farmers in North Korea's Qwail County to significantly expand their orchards," says Simon Miller, Mercy Corps' Apple Tree project manager. "By providing rootstocks, rather than a complete tree, we help local farmers build their knowledge of what it takes to manage an orchard so that in the long run we help foster greater self-sufficiency that lessens our need for involvement over time."

The rootstocks will be grafted onto branch cuttings from trees that Mercy Corps previously delivered to Qwail (translates as "fruit" in Korean) County, which is in the southeastern part of North Korea. Once a rootstock has been grafted, it can be planted and produce a completely new tree that is highly productive and resistant to drought and disease. Apples grown in this region are used for juice or kept whole for consumption. The apple tree rootstocks were purchased at a reduced price from an Oregon company, Meadow Lake Nursery near McMinnville. Meadow Lake is making an in-kind donation of apple trees worth \$10,000 that will ship to North Korea at a later date.

Since March 2000, Mercy Corps has sent three other shipments that totaled 71,000 apple trees. Agricultural aid has also included: 65,000 pounds of fertilizer, three windmills, 15,000 pounds of grass and alfalfa seed, and 23,000 pounds of vegetable seed (potato, barley, wheat, corn, soybean and green beans). All of this is part of the agency's long-term commitment to help North Korea increase its food security. Mercy Corps began its involvement in North Korea in 1996 when severe drought and famine led to the death of at least two million people. The country has never fully recovered and remains dependent on international food aid.

For additional information on Mercy Corps' work in North Korea and around the world, see <http://www.mercycorps.org>

FOOD AID - WFP OPERATIONAL REVIEW**Operational Review**

Schools and other child institutions reopened during the month after the traditional winter break. To mitigate the effects of the WFP cereal pipeline break parents sent packed lunches to some institutions. In others, the number of meals served was reduced. In many counties, officials reported that 100-150g of cereals a day were being provided to children from limited local stocks to partially offset the loss of WFP rations. While there were no reports by child institutions of increased rates of malnutrition, this was partly due to the limited duration of the WFP pipeline break.

Elderly people, a core beneficiary group, have been without WFP cereal rations since October 2003. In order to cover the gap a retired schoolteacher said that he and his wife had started to breed rabbits to bring to market. On average, they barter two rabbits a month for 2.5kg of rice and 4kg of maize. Their children helped them with some maize immediately after the main harvest in October. But as the children are also Public Distribution System dependents they cannot assist on a regular basis. The elderly man has a teacher's pension of USD 10 a month. Of this, USD 6 is used to pay for PDS cereal rations that meet less than half the couple's caloric requirements. The rest of the money goes on rent and additional food purchases from the State shop (salt, tea, soy sauce, vegetables). The couple manages to eat three meals a day, but it is a limited and unbalanced diet.

The provision by WFP since January of 60g a day of fortified biscuits to children in kindergartens has significantly boosted their intake of nutritious food, replacing popcorn, a traditional snack.

Most provincial authorities reported a milder winter than usual and expressed concern about the spring crop due to lack of

moisture in the soil. FDRC (government) officials in Chagang province said they fear a drought this year because of limited snowfall. Some hydroelectric power plants in South Hamgyong closed reservoirs to conserve water.

The main agricultural activity throughout the country during February was the transportation of organic manure to fields. There were reports of irregular payments to industrial workers and officials deployed to assist farmers with this and other tasks.

The PDS ration remained at 300g/person/day during the month, its composition varying by county. Meat, sweets and other items were additionally provided to mark the 16 February birthday of General Kim Jong Il. Meat was not distributed in the northern provinces on that occasion, reportedly because livestock numbers were too limited.

WFP Monthly Monitoring Visits

	Feb. 2004	Feb.2003
Ports	0	2
LFP factories	20	36
FDRC/PDC	132	107
Family visits	99	56
Hospitals	31	7
Orphanages	12	8
Kindergartens	20	37
Nurseries	57	63
Schools	17	33
FFW	19	22
TOTAL	407	371



WFP - FOOD FOR WORK

Only 8,000 MT of food are presently earmarked for food-for-work (FFW) projects in 2004 - 30% of the volume initially planned for the year. The tonnage available is being allocated to provinces/counties on the East Coast, in accordance with WFP vulnerability assessments. Nineteen of the 70 project proposals for the East Coast were assessed during the month, and 18 of them forwarded to the Programme Review Committee.

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Total output in February was over 4,000 MT: almost 2,500 MT of fortified blended foods; 1,380 MT of biscuits; 272 MT of noodles; and 23 MT of RMB. Production of biscuits and noodles was disrupted by lack of wheat-flour, a key donor-

supplied ingredient. The DPRK government's provision of 3,635 MT of wheat (part of the loan of 25,000 MT of cereals) subsequently allowed production at the affected plants to resume.

The arrival of cargoes of sugar - donations by Cuba and Finland - allowed CSM and CMB factories to revert to the standard recipes for their blends (10% sugar) and spare supplies of Dried Skimmed Milk which they had been using as a substitute.

Commodity arrivals

During the month of February nearly 3,000 MT of sugar and 376 MT of pulses arrived by train from China - donations from Finland, Cuba, Canada, Norway, Poland and New Zealand.

OCHA HDRC WEBSITE

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/dprk>

PREPARATION FOR UNICEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISIT IN MARCH

The UNICEF Pyongyang office has been busy in February preparing for the visit of its Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, on 13-16 March 2004. The primary purpose of her visit is to gain first hand knowledge of the situation of children and UNICEF activities. Ms Bellamy will meet with the Government, the UN Country Team and Donor community. She will also visit a Children's Foodstuff Factory and a Primary School in Pyongyang, as well as travel to Yonsan County to visit a nursery, a county hospital and a UNICEF assisted Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) project site. The last time that the Executive Director visited DPRK was in 1997.

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