



World Food
Programme

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Alimentos

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The Food Aid Organization of the United Nations

WFP Video News Release

DPRK

Duration: 02.47

Language: English

Shot List

0-00:26 Kangwon county hospital, shot 25 June 08

WFP assessment team visiting hospital treating malnourished patients

00:26-01:19

Various of children standing outside nursery
children inside nursery

01:19 – 01:35 SOT Martin Penner WFP spokes person, 30 July 2008

“after looking at the signs of deteriorating food security, we at WFP are now intending to scale up our food distributions so that we can assist about 6.4 million people, that compare to about 1.2 million people are helping at the moment”

01:35 – 02:03 Nampo port, Pyongyang, shot 29 June , 2008

Various of USS Baltimore docking and unloading

02:03 – 02:21 SOT Martin Penner WFP spokes person

“the United Nations has just carried out what we call a rapid food security assessment in DPRK, now the results of this assessment, the findings show that millions of people in that country are now experiencing hunger at a scale that hasn't being seen there since the late nineteen nineties .

2.21 – 2.47 WFP warehouse Pyongyang shot 29 June 2008

Various of WFP food being stored in warehouse

WFP News Release

30 July 2008

DPRK SURVEY CONFIRMS DEEPENING HUNGER FOR MILLIONS

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BEIJING – Millions of people in DPRK are experiencing hunger not seen in almost a decade according to findings of a new UN assessment in DPRK.

“Millions of vulnerable North Koreans are at risk of slipping towards precarious hunger levels,” said Jean-Pierre de Margerie, United Nations World Food Programme Country Director for DPRK at a press conference today in Beijing. “The last time hunger was so deep and so widespread in parts of the country was in the late 1990s.”

Flooding in August 2007 and successive poor harvests, compounded by soaring prices for staple foods, have led to the largest food gap since 2001 for the country of 23 million. Signs of deteriorating food security have prompted WFP to urgently expand food distributions to reach 6.4 million people, from the current 1.2 million caseload.

According to a three-week Rapid Food Security Assessment (RFSA), conducted jointly by WFP and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in June, food production in DPRK has sharply dropped alongside declining food imports.

The RFSA covered 53 counties in eight provinces (Rygang, North Hamgyong, South Hamgyong, Kangwon, North Hwanghae, South Hwanghae, South Phyongan, Pyongyang). Experts visited hundreds of households, child institutions and hospitals across the country in the most comprehensive assessment on food and nutrition conducted in DPRK since 2004.

Key findings indicate:

- Food availability, accessibility and utilization have deteriorated sharply since 2007. Close to three quarters of the households have reduced their food intake.
- More malnourished and ill children are being admitted to hospitals and institutions.
- Diarrhoea caused by increased consumption of wild foods was one of the leading causes of malnutrition amongst children under five.

The experts found that the majority of the families surveyed have cut out protein from their diet, and are living on cereals and vegetables alone. Food prices have soared -- rice now costs almost three times more than a year ago, and maize has quadrupled. Heavy reliance on support from relatives as a means of coping with food shortages is widespread in areas such as North Hamgyong Province, one of the worst affected regions.

“We’ve found that many more people are now scavenging for wild foods which provide little nourishment and are difficult to digest. Food assistance to reach the hungry is urgently needed,” said de Margerie.

To meet the growing needs, WFP is planning a new operation to target the most vulnerable women, children and elderly people in eight of the country’s ten provinces, valued at approximately US\$500 million. The two remaining provinces, Chagang and North Phyongan, will be covered by a parallel food aid operation run by US NGOs.

WFP food assistance is already on the way thanks to recent food aid pledges, including up to 400,000 metric tons by the United States, which started arriving in the country in June. But WFP is warning that more donations are quickly needed.



“We’re urging donors to step forward now to ensure we have enough food available over the critical months ahead,” said Tony Banbury, WFP’s Regional Director for Asia, adding that an additional US\$20 million is urgently needed to get through the next autumn harvest. “We have a massive task ahead and we need the international community to help us meet those challenges.”

Newly improved operating conditions negotiated with the DPRK Government in June mean that more than 50 WFP international aid workers will oversee and monitor the delivery of food assistance to 131 counties (up from the current 50) including the remote and traditionally food-insecure Northeast.

Donors to WFP’s current programme in DPRK include the United States (US\$60 million), Republic of Korea (US\$20 million), Russian Federation (US\$8 million), Switzerland (US\$6.6 million), Germany (US\$3.4 million), Australia (US\$4.2 million), UN CERF (US\$2.3 million, for CERF see: <http://ochaonline.un.org>), Multilateral funds (US\$1.9 million), Cuba and Italy (US\$1.5 million each), Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg and Norway (US\$1 million each), Finland (US\$737,000), Turkey (US\$150,000), Greece (US\$ 45,000) and private donors (US\$17,000).

Note to Editors:

Video and still footage available at news briefing in Beijing (10:30 hrs, 30 July; UN Compound, 2 Liang Ma He Nan Lu) or by contacting Marco Frattini/WFP Video Producer (Marco.Frattini@wfp.org, Tel. +39 06 6513 2275).

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency and the UN’s frontline agency for hunger solutions. This year, WFP plans to feed around 90 million people in 80 countries. Visit our website: www.wfp.org

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