

WFP

**VARIOUS LOCATIONS, NORTH KOREA AND BEIJING, CHINA
OCTOBER 31, 2005 AND RECENT
NATURAL WITH ENGLISH SPEECH
DURATION: 4.35**

**SOURCE: REUTERS (ANIL EKMECIC)/WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME HANDOUT
TV AND WEB RESTRICTIONS: NONE**

**INTRO: Future of U.N. food aid to North Korea hangs in the
balance as negotiations on the programme end without agreement.**

**SHOWS: SOHUNG COUNTY, NORTH HWANGHAE PROVINCE, NORTH KOREA
(RECENT - OCTOBER 17, 2005) (WFP HANDOUT - ACCESS ALL)**

- 1. PEOPLE QUEUING AT GOVERNMENT-RUN PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION CENTRE**
- 2. PEOPLE QUEUING / CORN AND RICE BEING DISTRIBUTED**
- 3. FOOD BEING PLACED INTO SACKS**
- 4. SACKS PILED UP / PEOPLE FILLING SACKS WITH FOOD**
- 5. PEOPLE QUEUING FOR FOOD/PEOPLE CARRYING AWAY SACKS OF FOOD**

BEIJING, CHINA (OCTOBER 31, 2005) (REUTERS - ACCESS ALL)

**6. BRIEFING BY RICHARD RAGAN, HEAD OF WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME
OPERATIONS IN NORTH KOREA**

7. SOUNDBITE (English) RAGAN SAYING:

"The North Koreans have asked us to stay, and they've asked us to stay in writing, they've clearly stated they want us to stay, but for us it's a question of whether we can stay under the kind of conditions to manage a successful programme. I mean we're not just going to stay there to stay there, we're going to stay there because we can have an impact and to have an impact we believe we have to have certain operational requirements that are met and that's sort of where the negotiation is right now"

KANGNAM DISTRICT, PYONGYANG (RECENT - OCTOBER 18, 2005) (WFP HANDOUT - ACCESS ALL)

- 7. WFP AID IN SACKS**
- 8. GOVERNMENT-RUN NURSERY**
- 9. NURSES AND CHILDREN EATING RICE**
- 10. CHILDREN EATING**

BEIJING, CHINA (OCTOBER 31, 2005) (REUTERS - ACCESS ALL)

11. SOUNDBITE (English) RAGAN SAYING:

"Donors have very clearly said to us, because the humanitarian programme is stopping, we're going to withhold our contributions so food is not coming as a result of it, two because we're unclear where we're going next, we're beginning to close down our programmes. We have these factories and we're stopping production in these factories in November and we have food on the high seas which we're diverting or holding up because we're unclear on the programme"

PHYONGWON COUNTY, SOUTH PYONGYAN PROVINCE (RECENT - OCTOBER

- 24, 2005) (WFP HANDOUT - ACCESS ALL)
12. PEOPLE QUEING AT DISTRUBTION CENTRE FOR LOCALLY GROWN CORN
13. CORN BEING PACKED INTO SACKS
14. PEOPLE QUEING

BEIJING, CHINA (OCTOBER 31, 2005) (REUTERS - ACCESS ALL)

15. JOURNALISTS

16. SOUNDBITE (English) RAGAN SAYING:

"Maybe they will be comfortable this year, but will they be comfortable next year and if WFP closes down its operations, getting us back in there in a big way is going to be very difficult if there's going to be a requirement"

WONSAN COUNTY, NORTH KOREA (RECENT) (WFP HANDOUT - ACCESS ALL)

17. SUNRISE OVER WONSAN COUNTY

PHYONGWON COUNTY, SOUTH PYONGAN PROVINCE, NORTH KOREA (RECENT - OCTOBER 24, 2005) (WFP HANDOUT - ACCESS ALL)

18. GENERAL SHOTS

19. SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN RECEIVING WFP BISCUITS

20. BISCUITS ON DESK

21. CHILDREN DRINKING

22. BISCUITS BEING DISTRIBUTED IN CLASSROOM

STORY: The World Food Programme on Monday (October 31) said it had failed to reach an agreement with North Korea on the future of its aid.

North Korea has said it wants to curtail foreign aid and move towards development assistance - leaving relief organisations scrambling to negotiate to maintain their programmes.

Public distribution centres are now stepping up handouts of locally-grown corn and rice.

Analysts have said the move is part of a pattern of the state reasserting its control amid official disquiet over monitoring.

The WFP recently wrapped up two days of negotiations in Rome with North Korea, but Richard Ragan, WFP Country Director in North Korea, said in Beijing on Monday (October 31) that differences remained.

"The North Koreans have asked us to stay, and they've asked us to stay in writing, they've clearly stated they want us to stay, but for us it's a question of whether we can stay under the kind of conditions to manage a successful programme. I mean we're not just going to stay there to stay there, we're going to stay there because we can have an impact and to have an impact we believe we have to have certain operational requirements that are

met and that's where the negotiation is right now," said Ragan.

The WFP began working in North Korea in the mid-1990s after it suffered a famine that killed as many as 2.5 million people.

Ragan said the lack of agreement was having an immediate impact on its programmes in North Korea - where it tries to feed 6 and a half million of the nation's neediest.

"Donors have very clearly said to us, because the humanitarian programme is stopping we're going to withhold our contributions, so food is not coming as a result of it, two, because we're unclear where we're going next, we're beginning to close down our programmes. We have these factories and we're stopping production in these factories in November and we have food on the high seas which we're diverting or holding up because we're unclear on the programme," said Ragan.

The government is reviving its public distribution system, but Ragan said it would be a mammoth undertaking to expect it to distribute hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food per month across the nation.

While North Korea has said it expects a bumper food crop this year, Ragan said question marks remained over food security in the longer term.

"Maybe they will be comfortable this year, but will they be comfortable next year and if WFP closes down its operations, getting us back in there in a big way is going to be very difficult if there's going to be a requirement," said Ragan.