

Key Humanitarian Messages

Democratic People's Republic of Korea
15 March 2013

- Although the overall humanitarian situation has improved slightly over the last 12 months, the structural causes of people's vulnerability persist. External assistance is needed and continues to play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of millions whose food security, nutritional status and general health would otherwise be seriously compromised.
- Inadequate medical supplies and equipment make the health care system unable to meet basic needs, while the water and heating systems need repair. Also, the rapidly deteriorating infrastructure of educational institutions is a concern that requires considerable resources to ensure safe and child friendly learning spaces.
- According to the 2012 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), timely imports of food and provision of agricultural inputs have contributed to avoid a food crisis this year. However, while the food gap is the narrowest in many years (with a cereal deficit of MT 207,000), the majority of people (around 16 million) remain chronically food insecure and highly vulnerable to production shocks. Around 2.8 million people in the most food insecure provinces need regular nutritious food assistance. Serious gaps remain between recommended and actual nutrient intake. Lack of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer and plastic sheets) remains the main challenge for food production.
- Malnutrition rates continue to be of great concern despite a modest improvement. According to the 2012 National Nutrition Survey, global chronic malnutrition (stunting) rate among children under five is 27.9%; while 4% are acutely malnourished (wasting). Anaemia is very present in children (29%) and women (31%). Chronic under-nutrition is a public health problem and is one of the major underlying causes of maternal and child mortality. Without proper nutritional care to improve their low proteins, vitamins and minerals intake, both stunted and wasted children will continue to have delayed growth and challenged development.
- The UN system continues to approach the protracted crisis through a sustained humanitarian response that addresses immediate and intermediate needs, while also addressing some of the root causes of the vulnerabilities in order to build resilience and sustainable livelihoods. Key humanitarian priorities include food and nutritional assistance, agricultural support, water, sanitation & hygiene and health interventions. But there is also a need for longer-term economic investment and development support, especially in agriculture, rural energy and in disaster risk reduction.
- The UN agencies in DPRK remain seriously underfunded. Consequently, humanitarian agencies are unable to effectively address the humanitarian needs. In 2013, a total of US\$ 147 million is needed of which only 27.8% has been received so far.

For more information, please contact:

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Overview of funding needs and gaps per sector in 2013

Agency	Sector	Total Needs (US\$)	Funding Gap (US\$)	% received
WFP	Food Assistance	93,000,000	61,000,000	34.4%
WHO	Health	17,000,000	11,300,000	33.5%
UNFPA	Health	1,300,000	500,000	61.5%
FAO	Agriculture	13,000,000	12,300,000	5.4%
UNICEF	WASH, Health, Nutrition & Education	22,790,000	21,100,000	7.4%
Total (US\$)		147,090,000	106,200,000	27.8%

- Provision of assistance must be based on the humanitarian principles: Humanity, Neutrality and Impartiality, and not be contingent on political developments. Separating humanitarian needs from political issues is a prerequisite for a sustainable improvement in the condition of people.
- Regardless of access challenges and operational difficulties, there is no denying of the humanitarian imperative. The UN system will continue to apply the strategy of previous years upholding the principle of 'No Access-No Assistance, and will continue to seek wider access for humanitarian activities.

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