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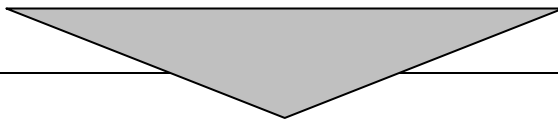
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EMERGENCY OPERATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF KOREA—5959.00 AND 5959.01

Emergency Assistance for Vulnerable Groups

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Executive Summary



Since 1995, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has been facing a series of natural disasters compounded by the very serious problems faced in the 1990s by its substantial industrial sector. As a result, food security has been gravely jeopardized and WFP is now in the fifth one-year phase of two successive emergency operations.

The climate for successive emergency operations was determined by an initial very low level of understanding between DPRK and WFP. In the absence of shared information about the approach and monitoring procedures to be followed, WFP was obliged to introduce and expand its own monitoring system. Over the last four and a half years, the mutual understanding between the Government and the international humanitarian community has grown dramatically.

The assessment of the mission is that the overall objective of the WFP intervention, to save lives by preventing food shortages from developing into a famine situation, has been achieved. However, food security is still very fragile, with agricultural production insufficient to meet even the minimal needs of the population. Because local coping mechanisms are also likely to have had some effect, it is not possible to prove a direct causal relationship between WFP food aid and noted nutritional improvements. However, it is clear that the assistance through WFP has made a very important and crucial contribution, even in the absence of hard data.

WFP needs to develop with the Government a more explicit medium term strategy for relief, natural disaster mitigation and recovery. It should move towards a more simplified and shared targeting system and programme structure which builds, among other things, on DPRK's experience and expertise in agriculture and secondary industry, and on the complementarity of United Nations agency interventions. The Government and the donor community should incorporate all WFP activities in one protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) at the earliest opportunity.

Draft Decision



The Board endorses the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.3/2000/5/3) and notes the lessons identified, taking into account considerations raised during the discussion.



BACKGROUND

Main Characteristics of the Country

1. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) rapidly recovered from the Korean War and evolved into an industrialized nation with a policy of self-sufficiency which led the country to adopt high-intensity agriculture. In the early 1990s, the termination of the country's privileged commercial ties with the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union adversely affected the economy.
2. The agricultural sector is constrained by the country's topography: approximately 80 percent of the land is mountainous and 18 percent is arable; the winters are harsh and the growing season is short. Soils are poor and the risk of erosion in the uplands is high. Food grains, rice and maize, are the principal staples. Traditionally, cereal crop yields have been high but obtained by an exceptionally intensive application of chemical fertilizers. Scarcity of inputs, soil exhaustion, and the spreading of pests and diseases have reduced yields to about one half of the former average. In efforts to cope with food shortages, the population has adopted practices that have a negative impact on long-term food security, such as cultivation on sloping hills. Large-scale harvesting of forests for household energy needs is another major concern.
3. Since 1995, DPRK has experienced a series of natural disasters that seriously affected its food security. In the summer of 1997, which followed two successive years of floods, the country was affected by a severe drought and a destructive typhoon. As a result, production of rice and maize fell sharply. A combination of food shortages, increasing health problems and a crisis in the health services has resulted in a substantial increase in mortality. In 1998, a nutrition survey revealed that 16 percent of children suffered from acute malnutrition (wasting, low weight-for-height) and 62 percent were affected by stunting (low height-for-age).
4. WFP staff have noted some improvement in the food situation since 1997 in the areas to which they have access, as a result of large inputs of food aid and better harvests. Caution should be applied, however, in extending this assessment to the country as a whole. Agricultural production is insufficient to meet even the minimal needs of the population, and a crucial food aid "safety net" is still required to help preserve the health status of vulnerable groups.

The Operations as Designed

5. WFP responded to the 1995-97 crisis with emergency operation (EMOP) DPRK 5710.00 including two expansions. DPRK 5959.00 was approved in early 1998 for a duration of 12 months, targeting in particular young children and other vulnerable groups. One third of the commitment was intended for food-for-work activities, mainly related to rural infrastructure rehabilitation. The total commitment for EMOP 5959.00 was US\$345.8 million for some 603,000 tons of commodities. This operation was subsequently expanded with the approval of EMOP DPRK 5959.01 in 1999. The total cost to WFP for this phase was US\$260.3 million for a commitment of some 585,000 tons of commodities, for a duration going from July 1999 to June 2000. Distribution under both EMOPs has been restricted to those counties to which WFP monitors have had access: 163 out of the total of 211 as of 29 February 2000.



6. The main objectives under EMOP 5959.00 and 5959.01 were: a) to save lives by preventing the food shortages from developing into a famine situation; b) to maintain and/or improve the health and nutritional status of young children and other identified vulnerable groups; and c) to support agricultural recovery through food-for-work activities.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RATIONALE FOR WFP INTERVENTION

7. The food security situation in DPRK remains highly precarious. Food deficits are no longer the result of emergency circumstances. Lack of foreign currency to purchase food, agricultural inputs and raw materials for domestic processing as well as deferred maintenance, obsolescence and power shortages have rendered most of the agricultural machinery and some irrigation equipment non-operational. The cereal supply/demand balance over the past five years, based on annual FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment missions undertaken since 1995, shows that DPRK has a substantial food gap with a yearly average shortfall (uncovered import requirements) of about 1.2 million tons.
8. During the period 1995-99, the difference between the estimated cereal deficit and food aid was never covered by commercial imports. At the height of the crisis in 1996/97, taking into account actual food aid, net domestic production and reported imports, the estimated cereal availability per person was around 25 percent below the requirements. Agricultural production during the last two years has slightly increased but it appears that DPRK has entered an era of relatively low-input, low-output agriculture. Food aid remains an essential requirement for the country's food security as the Government's capacity to import commercially remains extremely limited.
9. Food shortages have had a negative impact on the populations's nutritional status, as revealed by a statistically sound nutrition survey carried out jointly by UNICEF, WFP, the European Union (EU) and the Government in 1998. In accessible areas, nearly 16 percent of children under 7 were found to be suffering from acute malnutrition, a level that indicates the need for blanket supplementary feeding of the most nutritionally at risk, that is, children under 5 and expectant and nursing mothers.

ASSESSMENT OF THE OPERATIONS

Role of Food Aid

Vulnerable Group Feeding

10. In 1996, WFP initiated vulnerable group feeding to compensate for DPRK's increasing problems to provide children's institutions with adequate food. In targeting nurseries and kindergartens, the Programme not only aimed to cover the most vulnerable but also, at the same time, to ensure that the food reached the intended beneficiaries through on-the-spot feeding. Rations for children evolved from a supplement of 150 grams of corn-soya blend (CSB) in 1996—providing about 40 percent of the energy requirement and 100 percent of most micronutrients—to enhanced rations meeting some 80 percent of energy needs. In 1997, vulnerable group feeding was expanded to cover hospitals as well. In 1999, coverage was expanded to orphanages and the elderly.
11. Quantitative data on the nutritional status of children in kindergartens and nurseries supported WFP's commitment to further increase food assistance and to continue its focus



on children. The rations set for the vulnerable groups targeted through these institutions are adequate in terms of energy and micronutrients. Inclusion of CSB in rations for hospital patients, in particular for those in paediatric hospitals, would further improve the nutritional value of the ration. Under EMOP 5959.00, schoolchildren, expectant and nursing mothers (in 1998) and the elderly (early 1999) were included. At present, vulnerable group feeding includes nearly 6.4 million people in nine different target groups, who altogether receive seven different rations.

12. Schoolchildren initially were to receive 100 grams of biscuits in combination with cereals and sugar to be provided as a hot cereal drink. Due to a lack of heating and cooking facilities, rations were not provided as planned, and cereals and CSB were distributed to the pupils. It is unlikely that such distribution would exclusively benefit schoolchildren, because these commodities need to be prepared at home. Also, due to low availability, as of March 2000 the WFP delivery of biscuits was less than 5 percent of the planning figures.
13. Rations for expectant and nursing mothers continue to consist of cereals, oil and pulses, which by their nature are bound to be fully incorporated in the family diet, thereby diluting the impact. WFP's aim to substitute this ration by a more cost and nutritionally effective ration is fully justified. The mission, however, queries whether fortified noodles are the most appropriate commodity, particularly with regard to self-targeting.
14. Since 1997, WFP has developed various initiatives to process foods locally. The Programme has played a crucial role in boosting the local production of blended foods by providing essential equipment and technical know-how. CSB is already prepared in one factory that produces food for babies, children and others with special dietary needs. The mission noted, however, that production is sometimes interrupted due to the fact that not all ingredients are available or as a result of power cuts. Experience gained so far indicates that there is good potential for further increasing the production of blended foods.
15. The mission appreciated the value of processing local various commodities for transforming cereals into more readily acceptable foods and as a means of providing micronutrients to vulnerable groups. WFP's support for the rehabilitation of disused facilities has also contributed to the establishment of a more interactive relationship with the Government. However, the mission feels that the need, feasibility and cost-effectiveness of locally produced noodles should be closely monitored.

Food-for-Work Activities

16. WFP started food-for-work (FFW) activities in DPRK in 1996 under EMOP 5710.01. Since the beginning of WFP emergency operations in the country, a substantial amount of resources, about 228,000 tons, has been utilized directly by WFP to undertake these activities. The justification of FFW projects within the context of DPRK emergency operations lies primarily with the necessity to provide employment for the peri-urban and rural non-agricultural workers in under-utilized industrial sectors. Urban workers have been among the hardest hit by the food shortages, as many are entirely dependent on the Public Distribution System (PDS). Workers participating in FFW activities receive a daily ration of 2 kg of cereals per family (one worker plus two dependants) from the PDS centres.
17. The overall objectives of the FFW component are to address some of the root causes of vulnerability and food insecurity. In addition to providing relief assistance to food-insecure households, FFW interventions have contributed to promoting agricultural rehabilitation which increases overall food security and helps to restore the ecological balance. Among



the 15 different types of FFW activities undertaken, the most prominent ones are:

- a) recovery and rehabilitation of disaster-affected protective and productive infrastructure such as damaged sea dykes, destroyed irrigation and drainage systems, and land re-zoning;
- and b) prevention or reduction of vulnerability to future disasters by activities such as excavation of silted river banks and canals for irrigation and afforestation.

18. FFW projects have been implemented as a subset of the emergency operations. However, the mission noted that the Government at all levels places a high priority on FFW projects from a recovery perspective. FFW fits well within the usual communal practice in the country to mobilize labour as required. WFP-assisted projects have been improving in quality over time.
19. In the project selection process, the Government plays a critical role since project proposals are channelled through the Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) from the county to the province and subsequently to the central level in Pyongyang. WFP and FDRC then undertake a joint field assessment, the conclusions of which are presented to the Project Review Committee (PRC), co-chaired by FDRC and WFP. Project proposals are relatively well documented. The Committee pays due attention to vulnerability and rehabilitation needs. However, selection criteria are not easily available as they are not collected in a single document but incrementally developed and articulated in the course of successive PRC meetings.
20. WFP Emergency Officers have access to the FFW project site prior to, during and after implementation. Monitoring visits to project sites, observation of food distributions, interviews to workers, and visits to families by WFP monitors are mostly undertaken without any limitations. Improvements noted by the mission include closer collaboration between WFP and FDRC over monitoring activities; further sharing of monitoring results will strengthen that collaboration. Arrangements for joint monitoring visits of FFW projects appear satisfactory. Evaluations of the completed projects are also carried out.
21. Two promising projects have been implemented jointly by WFP, UNDP, UNICEF and FDRC to rehabilitate salt pans and to iodize part of the salt produced. The annual production capacity of the salt pans, once they have been fully rehabilitated, is estimated at 150,000 tons of coarse salt. It is expected that up to 7,000 tons can be iodized annually, with power shortfalls and shortage of packing materials being the main constraining factors. The main objectives of these projects are to support the Government to: a) prevent and eliminate iodine deficiency disorders through universal salt iodization; b) ensure adequate quality and quantity of locally produced coarse salt through rehabilitation of salt works; c) upgrade washing/refining facilities; and d) protect lives through the rehabilitation of sea dykes.
22. A needs assessment of tools and equipment required for FFW activities is normally carried out while appraising project proposals at the county level. Plans for distribution of these non-food items are made in consultation with the Government with an aim to eventually improve the quality of performance in the implementation of the FFW projects. The mission noted, however, that although carry-over stocks of non-food items available from EMOP 5959.00 were utilized, no new equipment has been distributed under the present phase due to delays in the procurement process.
23. One workshop was held at the central level in Pyongyang and ten more in nine different provincial capitals with a view to increasing understanding among Government officials on project identification, preparation and implementation. The primary objectives of these workshops are to: a) plan more viable and sustainable FFW projects; b) build up further awareness of the responsibilities, commitment to the programme itself and to enhance common understanding between WFP and counterpart staff; and c) upgrade skills for



effective implementation of FFW projects. Workshops appear to be of great importance for improving the implementation of FFW projects.

Targeting

24. In times of almost ubiquitous food shortages, blanket targeting of designated institutions is effective in terms of maintaining or improving the nutritional status because the issue of reaching those who are the most food-insecure is less relevant. The mission observed, however, that the efficiency of existing arrangements to reach the sick and malnourished—those who are less likely to be able to attend designated institutions—could not be confirmed.
25. Schools were targeted because of evidence of malnutrition among primary and secondary schoolchildren and the related high rate of absenteeism, especially in the lean season. Because children of this age are not the most vulnerable nutritionally, blanket feeding of this group in order to reduce acute and/or chronic malnutrition is not based on accepted nutrition principles and is usually not considered efficient. However, it may have been justified in this case on account of the emergency circumstances, particularly since distributions to these groups have been concentrated in the lean season. Targeting has been in response to seasonal vulnerability and is thus likely to have had a positive impact on both the nutritional status of the children and the food security of their respective households. The effectiveness of targeting hospitals appeared less convincing, in that crucial inputs, such as medical supplies and cooking facilities, appear to be inadequate.
26. Targeting of expectant and nursing mothers is a traditional practice in the country. Therefore, using clinics for identifying beneficiaries is particularly effective and efficient as virtually all such women attend clinics regularly. Criteria for the selection of the elderly seem effective in terms of justification, that is, only those in urban areas, without access to kitchen gardens and support from relatives. However, because the elderly are a relatively recent addition, a full assessment is not yet possible.
27. There has been an official gender focal point in the WFP country office since 1998 and gender considerations were included in EMOP 5959.01. WFP's Commitments to Women gained further momentum in the latter half of 1999, when the position of the gender focal point was assigned to a staff member in programming and a special consultancy reviewed all programmes and activities from a gender perspective. The first Gender Action Plan for DPRK, drafted in February 2000, aims to incorporate a comprehensive gender dimension pro-actively at all stages of programming. A fair amount of gender-specific data collected in previous years has been useful in the formulation of activities, targets and outcome indicators in the Gender Action Plan.
28. In vulnerable group feeding, 55 percent of the beneficiaries are female, and women's participation in food management is high. Due to the pervasive nature of food shortages in the country, initial efforts had focused on addressing the needs of all vulnerable groups. Subsequently, in 1998, a policy of specifically targeting women was introduced. The Gender Action Plan suggests several strategies to more explicitly facilitate women's access to resources, including through micro-FFW projects. In ongoing FFW activities, gender policy is being enhanced by supporting pilot women-run projects with specific work norms for women, by reviewing women's requirements for non-food items, and by an increase in the level of resources earmarked for projects run by women.



Monitoring and Logistics

29. The WFP monitoring systems in DPRK date back to when the knowledge and understanding within WFP and DPRK of each other's approaches and monitoring procedures was minimal. In the absence of a mutual understanding, WFP was obliged to introduce and expand its monitoring procedures in an endeavour to convey to its Executive Board an assurance of the effectiveness of the emergency programme.
30. Over the last four years, WFP has developed monitoring checklists for each of the eight components of the operation to a very high level of detail. Over the same period, agreement was reached with the Government for an expansion of the establishment of international staff from the three in 1995 to 46 today. Twenty-five of the staff members are Emergency Officers involved in programming who spend a significant amount of their time out of Pyongyang in the five sub-offices visiting families, institutions, Public Distribution Centres, and FFW sites.
31. Since the start-up of operations in 1995, there have been significant changes in the way WFP and the Government have come to work together. With the international staff now able to travel to more than three quarters of the counties, geographical access is no longer as serious a problem as it was two years ago, but it is still a significant issue. Vehicles have replaced trains for field staff travel and five residential sub-offices have been opened. Although still problematic, telephone communications have improved dramatically. The number of field visits with family interviews has increased markedly. Notwithstanding such progress, some important monitoring issues, such as that of the list of the beneficiary institutions, remain to be resolved.
32. With regard to joint WFP/FDRC monitoring of activities, the situation has changed considerably after the establishment of WFP sub-offices. WFP Evaluation Officers based at these offices are accompanied by FDRC staff on all visits to projects and also share their findings with FDRC provincial officers in weekly meetings. At the central level, the WFP Country Director holds weekly meetings with FDRC, at which they also share monitoring findings.
33. For a range of cultural and ideological reasons, the data obtained through the formal WFP monitoring systems are often subject to interpretation. The impressions gained by field staff of the situation that the country and the people are facing are more important at this time. The aggregation of these impressions is important for WFP to be able to periodically review the assessment of needs, to make suggestions on ways to improve the effectiveness of the activities, and to provide an accountability to the Executive Board on which depends the continued support of the international humanitarian community.
34. The DPRK operation is exceptional not only by its size, but also by the logistics arrangements which are, by agreement with the Government, limited for WFP to port operations and to rail shipments via China. The main volume of commodities arrives by sea in bulk for bagging at the ports. WFP has taken over the responsibility of discharge and bagging through their bagging contractors. The main responsibilities for WFP are the pre-planning, coordination and monitoring/supervision of the port operations. Port handling is slowed down by the poor standard of operation equipment such as cranes, forklifts, trailers and warehouses, but is mainly hampered by insufficient off-take from the port area due to insufficient numbers of railcars, barges and trucks. This keeps the daily handling capacity below what could be achieved. However, no losses of commodities are reported.
35. There has been a documented improvement in logistics over the past few years. A major factor is the Government's very significant contribution, in efficiently undertaking all required internal transport, distribution and other logistics arrangements in spite of the



challenges faced in key sectors such as transport and energy. The main areas where progress is still possible are: a) upgrading of vehicles allocated for the transport of food aid (the standard of some of the domestic rail cars and barges is a serious cause of damage to bagged commodities); and b) improved handling and storage of food aid in accordance with advice given by WFP. A major logistical problem is created by difficulties in managing the pipeline when donor and WFP resourcing plans do not coincide. This has created congestion, delays, additional costs and storage problems.

36. In an attempt to better manage the rate of delivery of food and overcome port storage problems, WFP has explored alternative in-country options, but has not identified a solution so far. Other delivery strategies are being examined.

Institutional and Staff Aspects

37. WFP has now been working for more than four years with the FDRC, a temporary committee with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries, as its principal counterpart. It took some time for a mutual understanding to develop between WFP and FDRC. The steady and deliberate increase in knowledge and acceptance of each other's positions and procedures over the last two years has been critical to the establishment of the much more constructive working relationship that exists today. The central FDRC structure has been replicated at the provincial and county levels and, with the establishment of five WFP sub-offices, the opportunity for building a common understanding at the field level was significantly enhanced.
38. Government contributions with regard to the provision of technical staff and of non-food items have been essential for the particular success of FFW activities. The provision of manpower and the supply of energy for local processing of fortified foods have been crucial for WFP's plans to rehabilitate a number of disused plants. The Government's efforts to provide energy for local processing in face of the serious fuel shortages are commendable.
39. Over the last two years there has been a dramatic increase in inter-agency coordination and collaboration. The new United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, who also holds the positions of United Nations Resident Coordinator, WFP Representative and UNDP Resident Representative, has exercised very effective leadership in this area and has been successful in encouraging the various agencies to see themselves as part of an integrated United Nations system in DPRK.
40. The Food Aid Liaison Unit (FALU) was established in the WFP Pyongyang office soon after the start of operations in 1995 to assist non-resident NGOs in programming food and other humanitarian assistance. FALU has proved to be a useful channel for those NGOs which for various reasons do not have their own staff in DPRK. Since its initiation FALU has facilitated the receipt and distribution of US\$37.5 million worth of food and other assistance. In 1998 and 1999, shipments through FALU were valued at US\$11 million and US\$9.9 million, respectively.
41. WFP's collaboration with NGO partners, as well as the working environment for all humanitarian agencies, has been adversely affected from time to time by the well-publicized departure of some of the NGOs working in DPRK. In general, these departures have been based on a belief in specific standards for relief or recovery assistance. However, the five United Nations agencies, 17 NGOs and two donor agencies involved in DPRK at the end of 1998 issued a consensus statement on humanitarian principles and standards in support of which the majority are still working in the country.



42. The mission questioned why, after four years, the EMOP had not been transformed into a PRRO in accordance with the Executive Board policy that such a transition should normally occur after two years. The resourcing policies of donors may have been key to this decision. However, although the EMOPs have continued for longer than usual, the Country Office has taken advantage of the experience it has gained and is now able to provide the kind of attention to strategic planning which normally is the critical design difference between EMOPs and PRROs. A pilot PRRO (DPRK 6157.00) was approved by the Executive Board in October 1999. However, at the Board's First Regular Session of 2000, the Secretariat explained that a Letter of Understanding for that operation had not been signed between the Government of DPRK and WFP, and that the Government's primary concern was the number of additional staff required for under the PRRO.
43. It is common knowledge that the strength of an organization lies in its staff. As staff commitment and performance are critically dependent on the environment in which they work, the working conditions of WFP international and national staff continue to be of the highest priority for WFP management in Pyongyang. In many respects, the living conditions of foreigners have become easier over recent years, although the separation from family, the limited availability of accommodation for new staff, the need for medical support, and medical evacuation facilities are still problematic. Moreover, staff working in sub-offices also face extreme isolation, a lack of personal freedom, and a frequent lack of heating, adequate food and safe water.
44. WFP has taken a number of steps over recent years to overcome the relative isolation of international staff on assignment. Orientation of new staff has been enhanced. Positive changes such as more frequent rest and recuperation (R&R) breaks, the encouragement of an activities programme, and the establishment of a peer support system have been introduced. Nonetheless, regarding staff morale, there appears to be an unreasonable amount of pressure on senior management in terms of office management in general and personnel management in particular.
45. In addition to its primary support functions with regard to purchases, logistics and media relations, the WFP office in Beijing also provides important backing for WFP staff posted in DPRK. Such assistance includes R&R arrangements, support to staff in need of medical care, and help with a multitude of practical issues for which facilities are lacking at their duty stations.
46. In terms of increasing international female staff, WFP has made significant progress, from 34 percent in 1999 to 43 percent as of March 2000. The number of women in middle and senior management positions is disproportionately small, however, particularly in programming. Although currently more than half of the 21 staff in this unit are female, only one holds a management position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vulnerable Group Feeding

47. There is a need to reflect on ways to simplify targeting without jeopardizing the aim of maintaining and improving nutritional stability. Simplified targeting may not only enhance efficiency, but could also facilitate a complicated monitoring system for this project. WFP should also consider meeting the additional nutritional requirements of expectant and nursing mothers and children under 5 with a special focus on those under 2 through one comprehensive distribution system involving health clinics and distribution to women. The



moderately malnourished could also be included. As elsewhere, the recommended commodity would be CSB for both groups. Should such a system prove to be effective, and given adequate time for its establishment, it would strengthen attention to health factors. Over time, the system could render the provision of CSB to nurseries superfluous, paving the way for the standardization of cereal, oil and pulse rations in nurseries and kindergartens.

48. Because food distribution in hospitals is only justified when the patients are ensured adequate treatment through the availability of medicines, equipment and other items, and where adequate cooking facilities exist, hospitals should be targeted on a case-by-case basis. WFP is encouraged to explore possibilities to contribute to the rehabilitation of hospitals through food for work. In view of the considerable non-food requirements, joint needs assessments by all actors, including NGOs, are recommended.
49. To further maximize the impact of local processing of blended foods, efforts to increase awareness about their use and nutritional quality should be further intensified and expanded to health clinics, among others. The mission acknowledges the value of local production initiatives in building WFP's constructive relationship with the Government but also recognizes that the need, feasibility and cost-effectiveness of locally produced commodities should be monitored closely. A review of achievements regarding the production of blended foods, biscuits and noodles, including their effectiveness in reaching intended beneficiaries and meeting nutritional requirements, should be undertaken in 2002.

Food-for-Work Activities

50. In the 1999 lean season, agreement was reached with the Government on specific geographical targeting in the northeast of the country. Since WFP is not in a position to respond to all the requests made for FFW projects, a similar prioritization exercise based on vulnerability and technical criteria should be initiated. The mission recommends that the relative vulnerability and rehabilitation needs of counties be established in close collaboration with the Government (FDRC) to determine which counties should have priority regarding FFW project implementation.
51. In view of the importance of a framework approach to programming using technical criteria to guide the identification and selection of projects, the mission recommends that the Project Review Committee be strengthened. Local technical expertise should be present and, in order to achieve coherence with the Agricultural Recovery and Environmental Protection (AREP) programme, a technician involved in AREP monitoring should be part of the Project Review Committee. FAO technical assistance (civil engineering, forestry, agronomy) foreseen under the pilot PRRO should be utilized for all WFP/FDRC projects in order to support the design and review of project activities. Collaboration with NGOs and others with the proper technical expertise should be encouraged. In addition, collaborative projects like the rehabilitation of the Namyang Salt Pan undertaken jointly by UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and FDRC should be further expanded.
52. Through day-to-day involvement in the implementation of FFW projects, local-level FDRC personnel monitor these projects. Monitoring visits to FFW projects are also undertaken jointly by WFP and the provincial-level FDRC. In addition to workshops already organized, WFP should arrange study tours for WFP staff and project implementation officers from counties and provinces.
53. At peak times around harvesting and planting of double crops, due to the country's climatic constraints, there is often insufficient labour to cover farm requirements. The mission recommends that particular attention continue to be paid to the programming of



FFW projects in order to avoid diversion of labour from essential farm activities, especially when cooperative farmers are employed. The mission further recommends more comprehensive approaches, for example, not limiting a WFP intervention to the excavation of a silted reservoir but also including soil and water measures for complete watershed management works. For the larger projects, a more elaborated cost/benefit analysis should be undertaken to substantiate project selection. Finally, the mission recommends that WFP-Pyongyang take measures to expedite the procurement process of non-food items in order to supply beneficiaries before physical implementation of a given project.

54. Within DPRK, there have now been five EMOP phases since December 1995, and at the time of the mission (April 2000), the start of a pilot PRRO was overdue and a sixth EMOP phase was under preparation. The pilot PRRO incorporated the transition in DPRK to a greater emphasis on food-for-work activities. The mission recommends, regardless of the operation category being used, that this transition from relief to recovery-based activities should at least be continued, if not substantially strengthened.
55. Although female participation in FFW has gradually increased, there is a need to further involve women as team leaders and project managers, for example by setting targets for the number of female participants in FFW workshops. WFP should also consider increasing female staff involvement at the level of project identification, formulation and implementation and to further identify projects that specifically benefit women in the longer term.

Monitoring and Evaluation

56. While considerable progress has been made in developing monitoring systems, the evaluation mission recommends that: a) as it moves into the sixth emergency operation phase, WFP clearly define its monitoring strategy for the medium term; b) WFP and FDRC rationalize and dramatically simplify the existing complicated set of WFP monitoring checklists to enable Emergency Officers to monitor more effectively and provide programme support; and c) WFP start to work with the Government to identify those DPRK monitoring systems which by agreement could replace those devised by WFP, for example WFP's Consignment Note monitoring system.
57. The overriding objective behind these recommendations is that DPRK and WFP should continue to build the level of confidence that the Government, WFP and the WFP Executive Board have in the monitoring system being used. The mission would encourage all parties to take a broad long-term view rather than a detailed short-term view on the development of appropriate monitoring methods.
58. The impact of the WFP emergency operations cannot be determined conclusively; assessments can only be circumstantial and anecdotal rather than indicator-based. It may be recalled that the first objective of the WFP intervention in DPRK was to save lives by preventing food shortages from developing into a famine situation. This has been achieved in the sense that a generalized famine situation has not emerged. Evidently the food situation has improved and, given the volume of food provided by WFP, this is likely to be attributable to WFP interventions. But while extensively applied coping mechanisms (such as kitchen gardening, raising of small animals at the household level, gathering of mushrooms, seaweed and other wild foods, and the production of alternative foods) have certainly also contributed, it is not possible to measure their impact. The nutrition survey system that has been introduced, if carried out regularly, provides a rough indication of changes in nutritional status but is not able to link changes directly to the WFP assistance. Extensive efforts have been made within the United Nations system to convince the Government of the importance of such surveys. To better measure impact and further



improve targeting and programming, WFP should explore possibilities of carrying out follow-up surveys under the umbrella of UNICEF's global multi-indicator cluster surveillance (MICS) system.

Institutional and Staffing Aspects

59. The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) does not appear to be as effective as it might be given the disjunction in timing between the Government's financial year, the issue of the Consolidated Appeal and the WFP EMOP. The CAP and WFP appeals should be harmonized to maximize the effectiveness of both channels for advocacy and humanitarian assistance to DPRK.
60. WFP should continue to expand its efforts to undertake collaborative initiatives with its United Nations and NGO partners. As WFP interventions have become more focused on recovery, there has been more direct involvement of DPRK technical expertise in the areas of food administration, public health, education and agriculture in the planning and implementation of the various interventions. The continuing shift towards recovery activities will necessitate the further involvement of these and other technical experts for greater effectiveness.
61. Currently it is DPRK policy for the Government to assign national staff to work in the WFP-DPRK office on specified tasks. Even though the quality of assigned staff has been improving, the duration of assignments has generally been too short to allow nationals to get fully familiar with the work. Many assignments have been for less than a year, with few exceeding two years. There would be considerable advantages for both DPRK and WFP if, on a trial basis, some national staff were assigned after consultation between FDRC and WFP. In addition, for the proper functioning of the WFP office, it is essential for the understanding between WFP and FDRC to explicitly reflect WFP management responsibility for all staff, both international and national.
62. Given the importance of building quickly a common understanding between new international staff and their DPRK hosts, it is essential that staff continue to choose to be assigned to DPRK. Consideration could be given to diversifying the responsibilities of Emergency Officers in particular, perhaps building on and expanding the existing "focal point" concept.
63. A programme the size of that in DPRK should be managed by an establishment which includes at least a Deputy Country Director at the P-5 level. Moreover, while recognizing that a key role of managers is the management of personnel, in an office with 46 international staff and some 50 national staff in a country as unique as DPRK there could be very good grounds for also including a personnel officer at the more experienced P-4 level among the senior management group. The Country Director should be able to exercise his/her responsibility for the establishment and rotation of local staff in the office and, within the overall parameters agreed with the Government, make any changes he/she may consider necessary.

GENERIC LESSONS IDENTIFIED

64. For emergency food programmes, a simple targeting strategy with a nutrition emphasis needs to be put in place at the beginning of the operation. Needs, feasibility and cost-effectiveness for local processing must receive special attention.



65. Impact assessment should be undertaken using hard data whenever possible. Whether or not such data are available, circumstantial and anecdotal evidence is also valuable. Geographical targeting based on vulnerability should be initiated as soon as possible in close collaboration with the Government.
66. Rehabilitation activities within emergency operations should be integrated as much as possible with existing development programmes to benefit from strategic framework planning and technical assistance. For sustainable recovery and reduction of vulnerability, comprehensive approaches for the reconstruction of productive assets are preferred. Collaboration with United Nations and NGO partners needs to be sought systematically to optimize WFP interventions.
67. In cases where the Government has considerable capacity, the monitoring strategy needs to be defined in close consultation with the Government to strengthen mutual understanding, and it should be based on a long-term view of programme development. The monitoring system should be operated jointly by WFP staff and local technicians.



ANNEX

TABLE 1: ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

| EMOP | Beneficiary category | No. of beneficiaries | | Actual distribution/requirements (%) | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| | | Target ¹ | Actual (%) | Cereals | Pulses ² | Oil | CSB | Biscuits | Sugar | Total |
| 5959.00 | FFW | 500 000 x 3 | 75 | 92 | 0 | 0.4 | | | | 81 |
| | VGF | 5 490 000 | 110 | 187 | 51 | 31.0 | 85 | | 2 | 108 |
| | Total | 5 990 000 (6 990 000) | 107 (103) | 141 | 34 | 24.0 | 85 | 2 | 2 | 103 |
| 5959.01 ³ | FFW | 550 000 x 3 | 91 | 40 | | | | | | 40 |
| | VGF | 6 394 000 | 94 | 55 | 88 | 87.0 | 62 | 4 | 10 | 52 |
| | Total | 6 944 000 (8 044 000) | 94 (93) | 50 | 88 | 87.0 | 62 | 4 | 10 | 50 |

¹ In brackets: including dependants of FFW participants.

² Includes canned fish.

³ To March 2000.



TABLE 2: ACHIEVEMENTS OF FOOD-FOR-WORK PROJECTS

| Project Type | Number | No of workers | Female (%) | Average (days) | % of resources | Primary benefits |
|---|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| EMOP 5959.00 (12 months) | | | | | | |
| Embankment | 14 | 63 109 | 53 | 73 | 19.5 | 9 950 ha arable land protected |
| Excavation | 35 | 194 111 | 53 | 68 | 53.7 | 22 205 ha arable land protected |
| Rural road | 3 | 20 055 | 51 | 59 | 5.4 | 19 km road paved |
| Reforestation | 4 | 29 571 | 50 | 40 | 4.4 | 4 570 ha reforested |
| Reservoir | 2 | 13 452 | 55 | 63 | 2.0 | water supplied for 95 000 families |
| Rehabilitated agricultural land | 1 | 2 732 | 55 | 90 | 1.1 | 350 ha land protected |
| Salt pan | 3 | 14 832 | 45 | 105 | 4.9 | 15 450 tons of salt per year produced |
| Top soil laying | 2 | 6 350 | 70 | 78 | 2.5 | 344 ha reclaimed |
| Fish pond | 3 | 10 731 | 50 | 60 | 3.5 | 266 tons of fish and 40 tons of mussels per year produced |
| Factory | 1 | 22 092 | 50 | 90 | 2.9 | Roof repaired, factory flood-protected, etc. |
| Total | 68 | 377 035 | 53 | 73 | 100.00 | |
| EMOP 5959.01 (9 months as of 2 April 2000) | | | | | | |
| Embankment | 8 | 39 999 | 50 | 52 | 7.17 | 2 445 ha arable land protected |
| Excavation | 28 | 132 837 | 49 | 61 | 28.83 | 8 315 ha arable land and 18 315 households protected |
| Rural road | 5 | 29 115 | 71 | 54 | 4.10 | 32 km road paved |
| Reforestation | 24 | 80 615 | 53 | 32 | 9.22 | 6 804 ha reforested |
| Reservoir | 3 | 9 926 | 75 | 67 | 2.52 | 10 420 ha irrigated |
| Rehabilitated agricultural land | 12 | 58 871 | 57 | 62 | 14.91 | 5 168 ha developed and 23 845 tons of crop produced |
| Salt pan | 2 | 8 668 | 53 | 68 | 2.30 | 4 965 tons of salt produced |
| Top soil laying | 8 | 23 394 | 53 | 69 | 5.12 | 1 008 ha reclaimed |
| Fish pond | 17 | 75 558 | 55 | 65 | 16.89 | 6 201 tons of fish and 4.56 million fingerlings produced |
| Water canal | 7 | 35 587 | 50 | 48 | 6.74 | 8 434 ha protected and 24 598 tons of crop produced |
| Sea dyke | 1 | 3 920 | 50 | 150 | 2.20 | 8 800 ha protected |
| Total | 115 | 498 490 | 56 | 66.2 | 100.00 | |



LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

| | |
|------|--|
| AREP | Agricultural Recovery and Environmental Protection |
| CAP | Consolidated Appeals Process |
| CSB | Corn-soya Blend |
| DPRK | Democratic People's Republic of Korea |
| EMOP | Emergency Operation |
| EU | European Union |
| FALU | Food Aid Liaison Unit |
| FDRC | Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee |
| FFW | Food-for-Work |
| MICS | Multi-indicator Cluster Surveillance |
| PDS | Public Distribution System |
| PRC | Project Review Committee |
| PRRO | Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation |
| R&R | Rest and Recuperation |

