

WFP /FAO Rapid Food Security Assessment – June/July 2008

Quick Overview

WFP/FAO conducted a Rapid Food Security Assessment (RFSA) in DPRK between 9 and 30 June 2008 to assess the food security situation and identify needs for external food assistance.

The assessment visited 53 counties in 8 Provinces (Ryanggang, North Hamgyong, South Hamgyong, Kangwon, North Hwanghae, South Hwanghae, South Phyongan, Pyongyang).

Methodology included 375 detailed interviews in urban and rural areas with families, managers and staff in hospitals and childcare centres – the most comprehensive survey since 2004.

Key Findings:

Declining food availability in DPRK due to:

- Reduced agricultural production for two consecutive years;
- Reduced imports, commercial and food aid, since 2005;
- Less in-country transfers due to transport constraints and more restrictions on market trade;
- Soaring global food prices.

Deteriorating food accessibility:

- Due to low in-country transfers caused by fuel and transport constraints; sky-rocketing market food prices (rice up 3 times, maize up 4 times);
- Cuts in Public Distribution System food rations (officially reported at 150 grams/person/day- a third of normal ration).

Deteriorating food consumption and dietary diversity:

- Close to 3/4 of households have reduced food intake;
- More than half are eating only 2 meals per day;
- Two thirds have poor dietary diversity (mainly maize, vegetables/wild food and small mounts of oil).

Health and Nutrition: Diarrhea cases in children have increased starkly– almost twice the level recorded by 2004 WFP/UNICEF/Government Nutritional Survey; more cases of malnourished and ill children reported in hospitals and institutions.

Who is food insecure?

- **Socially vulnerable:** children in child institutions, elderly people and children in paediatric wards;
- **Physiologically vulnerable:** pregnant and lactating women, children under 5 and adolescents;
- **Geographically vulnerable:**
 - The North East:** Ryanggang, North Hamgyong provinces; urban areas predominantly in counties with declined industrial activity; some flood-affected counties in the South;
 - In the south:** counties affected by floods in recent years, and South Hamgyong due to economic remoteness.

Recommendations: The mission recommended urgent food assistance, particularly for the current lean season (July-Oct08) when food stocks at household level are traditionally low. The mission also estimated that food production for the main harvest (Sept/Oct08) would be lower due to lower fertilizer and fuel availability, and indicated that substantial food needs might persist until next harvest (Oct 09). In the longer term, the mission called for greater inputs into the agricultural sector in terms of technology, fertilizer, etc.

The Full report will be released shortly.

Contact: **Lena Savelli**
DPRK WFP Spokesperson Mob +86- 13801054051