



January 2000

Winter conditions in DPRK have been particularly severe this year. For the first two weeks of the month roads were blocked and travel by Emergency Officers was restricted for safety reasons. Many roads were sheets of ice. Sub-office staff returning to Hyesan and Chongjin were turned back as the roads over the mountain passes were blocked.

Conditions eased as the month progressed and all sub-offices are now staffed again. On arrival at the WFP office in Hyesan, staff reported that it was -19 outside and -13 in the hallways of the hotel where the sub-office is located. Additional kerosene heaters supplied by WFP brought the temperature up to about 4C. However, the water stored in the bathtub was covered in a thick layer of ice.

While WFP can ease conditions for staff, for the people of the DPRK life during winter is extremely difficult. Factories, offices and institutions - including hospitals - are not heated. Schools and kindergartens close during this very cold time of the year. WFP Emergency Officers report that attendance is down in nurseries due to the cold.

As predicted power generation has been affected by the low rainfall last summer. Pyongyang is subject to numerous power cuts. Public transport is all electric-powered meaning the people often have to traverse this large city in sub-zero temperatures.

The situation is worse in the counties. County officials at Suan county in North Hwangae told WFP that they had stopped generating electricity completely due to lack of water. They had decided to save the water for agriculture in the spring.

Very few people are seen walking along roads or in fields which are frozen solid. Those who are out are all in pursuit of fuel for cooking and warming their homes. This is a woman's

role and they are regularly seen with a wooden frame - similar to a rucksack frame - tied to their backs to collect sticks. This is a predominantly hilly country and the effect this deforestation has on the environment is of grave concern.

...Pipeline Alert...

If additional pledges are not received this month WFP's cereal contributions will run out in April. The break in food supply will have serious consequences for the North Korean people during the lean season between April and June. Supplies of edible oil will run out at the end of July, and pulses will last until mid-September.

Nutrition Survey

The government has informed WFP and UNICEF that a nutrition survey will take place in April 2000 conducted by the government. There will be no international participation like the UNICEF/WFP/EU survey in 1998.

Access

No change in access for the fourth month running

Access :	163
No Access :	48
Total :	211

Monitoring

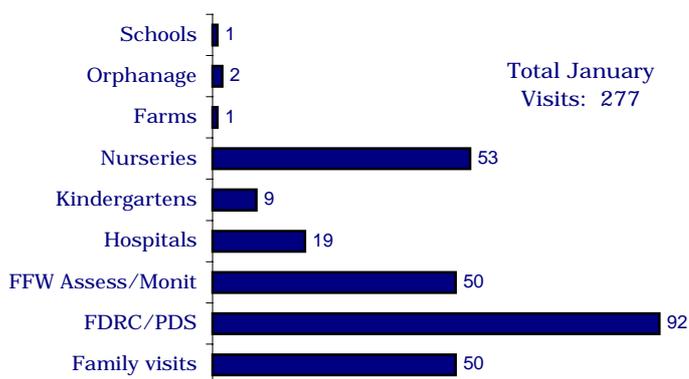
WFP Emergency Officers conducted a total of 227 monitoring visits in January. This number is slightly lower than normal due to severe winter conditions restricting travel.

PDS distributions in January were reported at 300 grams of cereals per person per day.

Overall, the food available from last year's harvest is reported to be more than in 1998.

The PDS is expected to continue distributing harvest food until June 2000. Ration rates between February and June however will be reduced to as low as 150 grams per person per day. In 1998 the PDS stopped distributions at the beginning of April.

Emergency Officers report that alternative food is being distributed in Nampo City and two counties in South Pyongan and two counties in North Hwangae.



Food for Work

The Food-for-Work (FFW) unit has been assessing projects for implementation. As at 31 January 2000, some 74 projects have been approved. These projects will require 30,122 Mts. of cereals. Another 149 project proposals have been received from the FDRC for consideration.

A proposal for a FFW project to be implemented and managed by women from Kujang county, North Pyongan province has been received. The project has been assessed and will be discussed at the next joint

WFP/FDRC Review Committee. Despite the large proportion of women who work in the agriculture sector, this will be the first time a project will be implemented and managed solely by women.

The FFW team report that local officials are concerned about the environmental degradation taking place in DPRK and emphasised the need for reforestation projects.

The WFP Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation (PRRO) which was approved by the WFP Executive Board in October 1999 includes reforestation projects. A Memorandum of Understanding to implement the PRRO has not yet been signed.

Local Production

During January local production amounted to 294 Mts. of CSB and 96 Mts. of biscuits. Production of biscuits was down somewhat this month due to power cuts. Biscuits are produced for school children who are all on holiday in January.

WFP has begun the process of purchasing new equipment to establish blended food facilities and rehabilitate existing biscuit bakeries in Sinuiju, Hamhung and Chongjin.

Logistics

Total arrivals this month are 19,528 Mts. Of wheat flour and 3,556 Mts. of DSM. Port productivity is down this month attributed to shortages of fuel for trucks and electricity for trains.

Rail transport has been severely limited this month. Chinese authorities will not release rail cars to travel into DPRK until the backlog currently in the country has cleared.

