

## Project facts

(On-going)

### The Agriculture Recovery and Environmental Protection (AREP) Programme

Initiated in response to the food crisis, the UNDP-supported national Agricultural Recovery and Environmental Protection (AREP) provides a strategy for co-ordination between the Government and the international community to restore agricultural production and decrease dependence on external food aid. AREP has four main areas: provision of agricultural inputs such as fertiliser, seeds and farm machinery; rural rehabilitation, forestry and the environment; and capacity-building.

Forestation is the only human land use that is not erosive. Soil nutrients and soil quality increase on land that is forested. Tree roots hold the earth together and protect it from being worn away by the weather, helping soil absorb water, especially during heavy rains that might lead to flooding on deforested land. Forests also help retain soil moisture, protecting against drought.

Many trees are also able to absorb atmospheric nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, enriching surrounding soil, which is of benefit to adjacent farms, as it decreases reliance on chemical fertiliser.

Donor partner: Northeast Asian Forest Forum

## NGO/UNDP co-operation will help reforest DPRK

A UNDP partnership project with the Northeast Asian Forest Forum is protecting agricultural land from soil degradation and erosion by rehabilitating much-needed tree nurseries

### AREP NEAFF Support to Forestry Rehabilitation

Recent years have seen a marked increase in deforestation and consequent soil erosion in DPRK. This has largely been caused by the increasing encroachment of agriculture on hill slopes. This encroachment has intensified as farmers struggle to boost food production. The increased pressure placed on farmers because of the food crisis has led many of them to deforest slopes to make way for crops. Forests are also under threat as people cut down trees for fuel for cooking and heating.

The problem has its roots in unprecedented flooding, which hit the country in 1995 and 1996, causing massive landslides and intensifying the problem of erosion even further. Many of these deforested slopes lie vulnerable to further landslides, should the country be hit again by heavy rainfall.

Erosion of soil will in-turn make the problem of declining food production even worse, as it decreases the amount of fertile land available, meaning that farmers have to encroach on even more forest.

Compounding the problem is the fact that many of the country's tree nurseries were destroyed or heavily damaged during flooding in the mid-nineties. Of the 90 Ministry of Forest run nurseries in DPRK, 30 were damaged. Sixteen have subsequently been rehabilitated.

In order to help stop this vicious cycle, UNDP is supporting the Government's efforts to reforest sloping land and therefore increase productivity of low-lying adjoining farmland. Plantation forests of fuel wood will also provide farmers with a viable alternative to encroaching on forests to obtain material for cooking and heating.

The Northeast Asian Forest Forum (NEAFF), an NGO based in the Republic of Korea, has partnered with UNDP to help reduce this problem by assisting in the rehabilitation of two provincial tree nurseries, one in Tongchon County, Kangwon Province and one in Huichon, Chagang province. The project complements one run by UNDP and another NGO partner, CARITAS, which is rehabilitating a county nursery, also in Tongchon.

The Huichon Nursery had 25 out of its 33 hectares destroyed by flooding in 1995. Tongchon lost 26 out of 40 hectares. Most of the destroyed land remains unrehabilitated.

The species planted at the nurseries, Japanese Larch, is fast-growing and can also be used as a high quality timber, providing future potential foreign currency earnings for the local authority.

UNDP hopes to continue this strategy of development, with similar projects planned for the future

The Northeast Asian Forest Forum is an NGO established in Korea, which aims to promote the environmentally sustainable management of forest ecosystems within the region.

It has committed US\$ 750,000 to DPRK to address the country's urgent needs in the forestry sector.

**Project No.:** DRK/01/A05  
**Location:** Kangwon Province  
**Started:** July 2001  
**Execution:** UNOPS  
**Implementing Agency:** Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee, Ministry of Forestry  
**Budget:** US\$ 573,539 (plus \$ 200,000 in kind)  
**Source of funds:** NEAFF

Last updated: November 2001