

**Sixty-eighth session**

Item 69 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives****Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [67/181](#) on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It provides a chronological update on the United Nations engagement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding the human rights situation in the country from September 2012 to August 2013, taking into account the continued lack of access to the country by the United Nations human rights mechanisms. This includes the establishment by the Human Rights Council of a commission of inquiry to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the country.

The report also touches upon the developments concerning family reunions and asylum issues in relation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, during the reporting period.

The report provides a broad update on the humanitarian conditions and refers to humanitarian assistance programmes of United Nations entities present in the country, namely the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme.

Lastly, the report contains conclusions and recommendations, addressed to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community, aimed at improving the situation of human rights in the country.

---

\* [A/68/150](#).



## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [67/181](#) on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in which the Assembly, while noting with appreciation the collaboration established between the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and some United Nations entities, expressed its very serious concern at the persistence of continuing reports of systematic, widespread and grave violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and its very deep concern at the precarious humanitarian situation, including a serious deterioration in the availability of and access to food, in the country. The Assembly also underscored its very serious concern at unresolved questions relating to abductions in the form of enforced disappearance, which violated the human rights of nationals of other sovereign countries. The Assembly also strongly urged the Government to extend its full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including by granting him full, free and unimpeded access to the country, and to other United Nations human rights mechanisms so that a full needs assessment of the human rights situation might be made. The Government was also strongly urged to engage in technical cooperation activities in the field of human rights with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

2. In the same resolution, the Assembly strongly urged the Government, among other things, to tackle the root causes leading to refugee outflows and prosecute those who exploited refugees by human smuggling, trafficking and extortion, while not criminalizing the victims, and to ensure that citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expelled or returned to the country were able to return in safety and dignity, were humanely treated and were not subjected to any kind of punishment.

3. The Assembly also strongly urged the Government to improve cooperation with the United Nations country team and development and humanitarian agencies so that they could directly contribute to improving the living conditions of the civilian population, including accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in accordance with international monitoring and evaluation procedures.

## II. Update on the United Nations engagement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concerning the situation of human rights

4. Since the previous report of the Secretary-General ([A/67/362](#)), there have been no substantial changes in the obstacles faced by the United Nations in systematically promoting and protecting human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The present section provides a chronological update on the United Nations engagement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding the human rights situation in the country from September 2012 to August 2013.

5. In paragraph 29 of his report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/22/57](#)), the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marzuki Darusman, noted that the International Coalition to

Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea, a coalition of some 40 international non-governmental organizations, had submitted a petition dated 3 April 2012 to the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council on the use of labour camps for political prisoners and the pattern of human rights violations committed in those prison camps. The petition was entitled “The situation of detainees in the gulag system (*Kwan-li-so*) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”. The Coalition recommended, among other things, that the international community should take effective measures to ameliorate the suffering of the 150,000 to 200,000 people imprisoned in the camps and that the United Nations, acting through the General Assembly or the Council, should initiate a commission of inquiry into possible crimes against humanity being committed in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for the purpose of holding the State and individual perpetrators to account. Based on that petition, on 3 October 2012, five mandate holders (the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; and the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances) sent a joint allegation letter to the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on the alleged use of labour camps for political prisoners (see [A/HRC/22/67](#) and Corrs.1-2, country case No. PRK 1/2012). At the time of writing of the present report, the mandate holders had received no response.

6. At a press conference on 18 October 2012, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as a neglected situation on which she would seek to shine more of a spotlight. She expressed her concern about reports of the use of political prison camps, frequent public executions and severe food shortages. She noted that the Government had accepted neither a visit by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea since the post was created in 2004, nor her offer to provide technical assistance, including specific proposals to help to review the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedures Code to bring them in line with the State’s international obligations.<sup>1</sup>

7. On 5 November 2012, during a meeting with the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, the High Commissioner explained the background to her concerns and offered technical assistance to the Government to proactively address human rights inside the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

8. On 2 November 2012, in his statement to the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur called upon Member States to set up a more detailed mechanism of inquiry, based on the assessment of the underlying patterns and trends following a comprehensive review of United Nations documentation and resolutions on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea since 2004. In that statement, he also highlighted his continuing concern at the abduction of foreign nationals, which remains unresolved, with some 500 reported cases of abduction of citizens of the Republic of Korea and 12 reported cases of abduction of Japanese nationals (see [A/C.3/67/SR.27](#), paras. 1-10).

---

<sup>1</sup> See [www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/%28httpNewsByYear\\_en%29/65275FD15C582F99C1257A9B00476EFB?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/%28httpNewsByYear_en%29/65275FD15C582F99C1257A9B00476EFB?OpenDocument).

9. On 20 December 2012, at the General Assembly, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated, among other things, that the Government categorically rejected the resolution on the human rights situation in his country, and denied the violations mentioned therein. He said that the text was propaganda to create pressure on the country's socialist system, which constituted interference in its internal affairs. It showed double standards, he said, noting that any consideration of human rights must be undertaken in accordance with the principles of impartiality and non-selectivity through the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review mechanism. While the resolution had been adopted without a vote, it could not be interpreted as having been adopted by consensus (see [A/67/PV.60](#)).

10. On 14 January 2013, the High Commissioner issued a press statement in which she gave a broad overview of the human rights concerns in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, describing it as one of the worst — but least understood and reported — human rights situations in the world. She referred to a meeting that she had held with survivors of the country's prison camps and what she termed their “harrowing” personal stories, noting that the camp system involved “rampant violations, including torture and other forms of cruel and inhumane treatment, summary executions, rape, slave labour, and forms of collective punishment that may amount to crimes against humanity”. She called for the international community to put much more effort into tackling the human rights situation, saying that the time had come for a full-fledged international inquiry into the serious crimes that had been taking place in the country for decades.<sup>2</sup>

11. On 23 January 2013, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva met the High Commissioner to discuss her statement. The High Commissioner reiterated the importance of having access to the country and suggested that the Government should invite relevant thematic special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council. She reiterated her offer of assistance to the Government.

12. In a letter dated 28 January 2013 to the President of the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/22/G/4](#)), the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conveyed his country's categorical rejection of the “Special Rapporteur” and the “resolution” on the establishment of mandate of the “Special Rapporteur”. He further noted that, “as in the past, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to consistently maintain its principled position of opposing and rejecting this politically motivated ‘Special Rapporteur’”.

13. On 28 February 2013, five special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; and the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances) released a joint press statement in which they voiced their support for the establishment of an international inquiry into human rights abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They referred to their joint allegation letter dated

---

<sup>2</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12923&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12923&LangID=E).

3 October 2012 (see para. 5 above). They urged the Government to cooperate fully with the international human rights mechanisms, including any inquiry mechanism appointed by the Council.<sup>3</sup>

14. On 11 March 2013, at the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presented his report ([A/HRC/22/57](#)), covering a comprehensive review of no fewer than 60 United Nations documents on the situation of human rights in the country, including 22 reports by the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur, and 16 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Council and the Commission on Human Rights since the establishment of the Special Rapporteur's mandate in 2004. He called upon Member States to set up an inquiry mechanism with adequate resources to investigate and document grave, systematic and widespread violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He identified nine key interlinked patterns of violations on which the United Nations had focused in the reports and resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: violations of the right to food; torture and inhuman treatment; arbitrary detention; violations of human rights associated with prison camps; discrimination; extensive violations of freedom of expression and other related freedoms; violations of the right to life; restrictions on freedom of movement and abusive treatment of citizens forcibly returned; and enforced disappearances, including abductions of foreign nationals. In paragraph 31 of the report, the Special Rapporteur detailed his recommendations and stressed that the inquiry should examine the issues of institutional and personal accountability for such violations, in particular where they amounted to crimes against humanity, and make appropriate recommendations to the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community for further action. In a press statement issued on the same day, the Special Rapporteur expressed his belief that many, if not all, of those nine patterns might amount to crimes against humanity, committed as part of systematic and/or widespread attacks against the civilian population.<sup>4</sup>

15. On 11 March 2013, during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur at the Human Rights Council, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expressed, among other things, his delegation's total rejection of the report of the Special Rapporteur. He said that there should be no illusion that such pressure as an inquiry mechanism would bring about any change in the principles of his country.<sup>5</sup> In conclusion, he reiterated the commitment of the Government to continuing to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people.

16. On 21 March 2013, the Human Rights Council adopted, without a vote, resolution [22/13](#), in which it extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year and established, also for one year, a commission of inquiry comprising three members, one of whom should be the Special Rapporteur, with the other two members appointed by the President of the Council. In paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Council decided that the commission would investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic

<sup>3</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13058&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13058&LangID=E).

<sup>4</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13116&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13116&LangID=E).

<sup>5</sup> For a summary of the discussion, see [www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/0D299F1DC33D7825C1257B2B0060588B?OpenDocument#](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/0D299F1DC33D7825C1257B2B0060588B?OpenDocument#).

People's Republic of Korea, as outlined in paragraph 31 of the report of the Special Rapporteur. The Council also requested the commission to present an oral update to the Council at its twenty-fourth session and to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, and a written report to the Council at its twenty-fifth session. The Council, in paragraph 12 of the resolution, decided to transmit all reports of the commission to all relevant bodies of the United Nations and to the Secretary-General for appropriate action.

17. On 7 May 2013, the President of the Human Rights Council announced the appointment of Michael Kirby (Australia) and Sonja Biserko (Serbia) to join the Special Rapporteur to serve as members of the commission, with Mr. Kirby as Chair.<sup>6</sup>

18. On 10 May 2013, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wrote to the President of the Human Rights Council in reference to the appointment of the commissioners, reiterating that his country had neither recognized nor accepted the "resolutions" adopted by the Human Rights Council and the "Special Rapporteur" and totally and categorically rejected the commission.

19. On 5 July 2013, the commission released a press statement in which it announced that it had begun its operations with an initial week-long meeting in Geneva, welcoming the large amount of information already being provided by witnesses and experts. The commissioners stated that they had been holding key meetings, including with a number of diplomatic missions, United Nations agencies, scholars and non-governmental organizations, and that they had been discussing the strategy, methodology and investigative approach that they would employ during their mandate. They also stated that they had written to the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to seek engagement in a spirit of cooperation and transparency and that the response had to date been negative. They expressed their intention to continue to reach out to the Government and seek its cooperation.<sup>7</sup>

20. The commission held public hearings in Seoul from 20 to 24 August 2013 and in Tokyo on 29 and 30 August. Those testifying before the commission in Seoul included more than 40 witnesses who had left the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and were able to provide first-hand accounts of violations of their human rights. The Tokyo hearings included testimonies on the abductions of Japanese nationals to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. More information about the work of the commission, including its mandate and methods of work, and video footage of the public hearings, is available on its website.<sup>7</sup> The commission provided an oral update to the Human Rights Council on 17 September 2013. It is scheduled to provide an oral update to the General Assembly on 29 October and a written report to the Council in March 2014. The commission has also invited individuals, groups and organizations to submit, before 3 November, information and documentation on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to meaningfully address all the issues shared with the commission and to prepare a full written report with its findings and recommendations for submission to the Council well ahead of its session in March 2014.

---

<sup>6</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13301&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13301&LangID=E).

<sup>7</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/CommissionInquiryonHRinDPRK.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/CommissionInquiryonHRinDPRK.aspx).

### III. Update on asylum issues and family reunions

#### A. Asylum seekers

21. On 30 May 2013, the Special Rapporteur issued a press statement in which he expressed his extreme concern for the protection of nine defectors from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, mostly teenagers and reportedly all orphans, who had reportedly been returned to China on 27 May from the Lao People's Democratic Republic. They had reportedly been arrested by the Lao police while crossing the border with China. He noted that, at the time of the press statement, the status and whereabouts of the group were unknown. He appealed to the authorities, if the group had already been returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to show transparency and give the group access to an independent actor who could determine their status and well-being.<sup>8</sup>

22. Also on 30 May 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees expressed grave concern over the safety and security of the nine defectors and strongly called upon all States to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement as a core tenet of customary international law and refrain from any future measure that could directly or indirectly lead to the return of a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened. He also noted that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was concerned that the deported individuals had not had a chance to have their asylum claims assessed, and that the Office was in contact with the Lao authorities to establish the initial facts behind that incident and to prevent any future deportation of persons of concern.<sup>9</sup>

23. On 31 May 2013, the spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed extreme concern for the protection of the group and urged the Chinese and Lao authorities to publicly clarify their fate, in addition to the conditions under which they had been returned to Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He also requested the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to provide immediate access to the group by independent actors in order to verify their status and treatment.<sup>10</sup>

24. On 6 June 2013, the Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva sent a note verbale to OHCHR in which it explained that the Government had dealt with the return of the nine people in question in the context of its efforts to combat human trafficking and illegal immigration.

25. In a note verbale to OHCHR dated 10 June 2013, the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva attached a statement dated 5 June 2013 by the Central Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross Society regarding what it termed "the recent attempted abduction of nine youngsters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by a south Korean group in the Lao People's Democratic Republic".<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13381&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13381&LangID=E).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.unhcr.org/51a7510b9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/51a7510b9.html).

<sup>10</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13390&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13390&LangID=E).

<sup>11</sup> The statement of 5 June 2013 was also reported by the Korea News Service in Tokyo; see [www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201306/news05/20130605-21ee.html](http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201306/news05/20130605-21ee.html).

26. On 10 June 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights wrote to the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and China to express her grave concern for the protection of the nine people in question. She appealed to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to show transparency in its handling of the case, to urgently clarify the fate of the group and to immediately grant access to the group by independent actors in order to verify their status and treatment.

27. On 25 June 2013, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea responded in a letter to the High Commissioner, enclosing an article by the Korean Central News Agency on the round-table talks held on 20 June 2013 with "the teenagers who came back to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea while being taken away to the south Korea after being kidnapped by south Koreans, which was reported by the Korean Central television on 21 June 2013".<sup>12</sup> He also advised the High Commissioner "to investigate and punish the human traffickers who kidnapped and attempted to take away not only the nine youngsters but also other Democratic People's Republic of Korea citizens to south Korea and elsewhere".

28. On 2 July 2013, the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations informed the High Commissioner by letter that the nine citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had entered China on 27 May and had left for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 28 May with lawful and valid travel documents and visas; that the Chinese border control authorities had approved their entry and exit after examining their travel documents in accordance with Chinese law; and that China had received no request from either the Lao People's Democratic Republic or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to facilitate their return. It was also indicated that the Government of China strictly abided by its international obligations.

## **B. Family reunions**

29. On 23 August 2013, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea held working-level talks and agreed to resume, after a three-year hiatus, reunions of families separated since the 1950-1953 Korean War. The agreement is reported to include measures to confirm the living status of the separated families, allowing them to exchange letters and regularizing family reunions. It is expected that 100 people from each side will be allowed to meet their family members from the other side at Mount Geumgang in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from 25 to 30 September 2013. The two countries also agreed to hold reunions by videoconference between 40 families on each side, on 22 and 23 October 2013. Another round of reunions is expected to be held in November 2013.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> The round-table talks were also reported by Korea News Service in Tokyo; see [www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201306/news20/20130620-20ee.html](http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201306/news20/20130620-20ee.html).

<sup>13</sup> See press release dated 26 August 2013 by the Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea, at <http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/CmsWeb/viewPage.req?idx=PG0000000513>; see also Central News Agency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, "Inter-Korean Red Cross Working Talks Held" (23 August 2013), at [www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm](http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm).



#### **IV. Update on assistance for the improvement of humanitarian conditions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extended by the United Nations system**

30. The United Nations has identified food and nutritional assistance, agricultural support, water, sanitation and hygiene, and health interventions as key humanitarian priorities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Nations agencies in the country remain seriously underfunded, and external assistance is needed and continues to play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of millions of people whose food security, nutritional status and general health would otherwise be seriously compromised.<sup>14</sup>

31. Five United Nations system agencies in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) issued a press release on 29 April 2013 in which they appealed for urgent funding of \$29.4 million in order to be able to meet the most critical and life-saving needs in the areas of health and nutrition up to the end of 2013. They explained that they needed a total of \$147 million for 2013 to respond to key humanitarian priorities, but had received only 26.8 per cent of the requirement. They were therefore unable to respond effectively to the humanitarian needs, the most critical and life-saving of which required \$29.4 million. They further noted that, even though the imposed sanctions clearly excluded humanitarian assistance, a negative impact on the levels of humanitarian funding had been experienced. The dire funding situation left the agencies and other humanitarian actors concerned about the continuation of their programmes in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.<sup>15</sup>

32. On 16 July 2013, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator announced the allocation of \$172 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for humanitarian work in neglected crises in 12 countries in 2013, including \$6 million for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.<sup>16</sup> While the Fund continues to play a central role in ensuring that the most vulnerable people continue to be reached, it has limited resources and is not designed to support the significant scaling-up of humanitarian response required to meet the total needs in the country.<sup>17</sup>

33. On 15 August 2013, in its report entitled "Humanitarian needs and priorities: Democratic People's Republic of Korea 2013",<sup>17</sup> the United Nations country team reported that the humanitarian programmes of five United Nations agencies in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained drastically underfunded. Of the

<sup>14</sup> See "Key humanitarian messages, Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (15 March 2013), available at <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Key-Humanitarian-Messages-for-DPRK-15-March-2013.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> See [www.unicef.org/media/media\\_68984.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_68984.html).

<sup>16</sup> See <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Press%20release%20CERF%20Underfunded%20round%20202013%2016July%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> See "Humanitarian needs and priorities: Democratic People's Republic of Korea 2013", sect. 4, available at <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OFD-DPR%20Korea15Aug.v2.pdf>.

overall requirement of \$150 million for 2013, \$98 million was still urgently needed for food and agricultural support, health and nutrition, water and sanitation interventions. The United Nations Resident Coordinator expressed the hope that donors would respond quickly and generously to allow United Nations agencies to address the humanitarian situation, noting that separating humanitarian needs from political issues was a prerequisite for a sustainable improvement in the condition of people.<sup>18</sup>

34. The United Nations country team also mentioned the persistent struggle with funding deficits for its humanitarian activities and noted that the latest political developments that had resulted in further sanctions on the country had created additional constraints with regard to providing vital assistance. The recent inability of the United Nations agencies to use their regular banking routes had also adversely affected important functions, such as in-country procurement, monitoring visits, effective programme delivery, capacity-building programmes and general operating expenditure.

35. In chapter 5 of the report, the country team identified food security, treatment and prevention of life-threatening diseases and malnutrition as immediate needs. It noted that, over the past few years, the Government had more openly recognized humanitarian needs and had increasingly shown an interest in working more closely with the international community to address those needs, including by granting more favourable operating conditions.

36. A workshop on disaster management and risk reduction was organized for government officials and their partners in Pyongyang from 24 to 27 June 2013 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

37. Torrential rain between 12 and 22 July 2013 caused severe flooding throughout the country, in particular in North and South Pyongan. The Government reported extensive damage, including to some 11,000 hectares of farmland and more than 11,600 buildings, affecting 13,000 families and displacing more than 47,000 people. On 23 July, the Government requested the United Nations agencies to undertake an assessment in two counties in North Pyongan.

38. The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, in its report on the flooding,<sup>19</sup> stated that, according to the crop and food security assessment mission conducted by FAO and WFP in October 2012, timely imports of food and provision of agricultural inputs had contributed to averting a food crisis in 2013, with a cereal deficit of 207,000 tons compared with 414,000 tons in 2012. A national nutrition survey, conducted in October 2012, showed a slight improvement in overall malnutrition rates, great variations by province notwithstanding. The average chronic malnutrition (stunting) rate among children under 5 years of age was 27.9 per cent, while 4 per cent were acutely malnourished (wasting). Anaemia prevalence was very high in children (29 per cent) and women (31 per cent). Around 16 million people (66 per cent of the total population) depended on the public distribution system and were therefore considered chronically food insecure at

---

<sup>18</sup> See <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-peoples-republic-korea/un-calls-us98-million-respond-urgent-humanitarian>.

<sup>19</sup> See <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-peoples-republic-korea/dprk-flooding-office-resident-coordinator-situation-report>.

various degrees. All children under 5 years of age, and pregnant and lactating women, were dependent on an external supply of essential drugs and vaccines.

39. It was stated in the situation report that undernutrition was one of the major underlying causes of maternal and child mortality. The maternal mortality ratio remained high — estimated at 81 per 100,000 live births. The infant mortality rate stood at 26.3 per 1,000 live births and the neonatal mortality rate at 18 per 1,000 live births. Health service delivery was in dire need of repair and maintenance in order to meet the adequate and very basic health-care needs of the people. Diarrhoea and pneumonia owing to untreated infection remained the two main killers among children under 5 years of age.

40. It was further stated that deterioration of the water infrastructure, lack of resources to replace dilapidated facilities and constant power supply shortages remained crucial problems. Malnutrition, inadequate access to safe drinking water and poor sanitation services, coupled with poor food hygiene, were the key factors contributing to the high incidence of water-borne diseases.

41. The following section contains a summary of the activities of the United Nations entities present in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from September 2012 to August 2013. Through an integrated approach, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO and UNFPA respond to humanitarian needs, while also addressing, with the involvement of UNDP, some of the root causes of vulnerability in order to help to build resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

## **A. United Nations Children's Fund**

42. The current UNICEF country programme (2011-2015) seeks to assist the realization of all children's rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea relating to survival, development, protection and participation. It aims at strengthening the development of a national policy environment conducive for children through advocacy, provision of increased technical support to key ministries, building strategic alliances with organizations such as the GAVI Alliance (formerly the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, in addition to the adoption of innovative communication for development strategies. In particular, the programme supports strengthening access to health and nutrition services, clean water and improved sanitation, and early learning with a focus on achieving equitable coverage of key intervention services for children.

43. During the reporting period, UNICEF continued to work closely with WHO and UNFPA on key interventions for improving child and maternal health, including immunization, the provision of essential medicines and training in the integrated management of childhood illness, essential newborn care and safe delivery. An important collaborative partnership between UNICEF, WHO, the GAVI Alliance and the Government resulted in the nationwide introduction of pentavalent vaccine in 2012 with government co-financing. The vaccination programme achieved and sustained a high national immunization coverage rate of more than 98 per cent, except for DTP-Hepatitis B vaccine (95.7 per cent). During the biannual Child Health Day(s) in 2012, 1 million children aged between 24 and 59 months were dewormed and 1.5 million children aged between 6 and 59 months received vitamin A. The Government endorsed the "Committing to child survival: a promise

renewed” initiative in September 2012, reaffirming its commitment to child survival and development.

44. During 2012, the first phase of the programme to combat malaria and tuberculosis, funded by the Global Fund, was successfully completed. UNICEF worked closely with WHO and the Ministry of Public Health to deliver results. Considerable progress was achieved: a 24.2 per cent reduction in overall malaria incidence against the target of 20 per cent; 100 per cent treatment of malaria cases in accordance with the national treatment protocol; and an 81 per cent case detection rate for new smear-positive cases of tuberculosis and a success rate of more than 90 per cent for treatment. The programme also resulted in the strengthening of the health system in areas of monitoring and evaluation, overall supply chain management and monitoring of drug quality. The implementation of the second phase is well under way.

45. In late 2012, a national nutritional survey was conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, in partnership with the Child Nutrition Institute and the Ministry of Public Health, with technical assistance from UNICEF, WFP and WHO. The survey found that 1 in 4 children (27.9 per cent) were stunted, with disparities across provinces. The prevalence of global acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age was 4.0 per cent, while 0.6 per cent suffered from severe acute malnutrition. Almost a quarter of women between 15 and 49 years of age (23.2 per cent) were undernourished, with a mid-upper-arm circumference of less than 225 mm. It also showed that continued progress was required for children to have access to more varied foods and sufficient vitamins, minerals and proteins to ensure their healthy growth. Diversified food is essential for growth and development. The lack of diversified food means that children are not receiving the correct nutrients that they need to survive and thrive. In this light, intensified commitment and sustained cooperation among various sectors, such as health, agriculture and water and sanitation, along with continued international assistance, will continue to be essential.

46. To address malnutrition, UNICEF continued to support the treatment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, in selected hospitals, health clinics and baby homes at the national, provincial and community levels. At these facilities, multi-micronutrient supplements are provided to pregnant and lactating mothers, while iron and folic acid are provided to pre-pregnant women. Meanwhile, UNICEF also supported the revitalization of the production of iodized salt to contribute to ensuring sustainable access to iodized salt for all the population.

47. In the area of water and sanitation, UNICEF continued to support the improvement of water supply systems and promote sanitation and safe hygiene practices in institutions and communities. The pilot water supply situation assessment survey conducted in two counties in 2012 showed that the effective coverage for safe drinking water might be less than reported in available data. Building on the experience of this pilot assessment, UNICEF and the Ministry of City Management are initiating a further roll-out of the water supply situation assessment in 2013 and beyond.

48. In ensuring equitable access to high-quality education, UNICEF supported selected educational institutions attended by underprivileged children (e.g. orphans, children with disabilities and children living in remote and inaccessible areas). Meanwhile, UNICEF also supported the Government in expanding new approaches

in teacher training and instructional methodologies and helped to prepare a nationwide learning assessment, which will be conducted in 2013.

## **B. World Food Programme**

49. The modalities of WFP operations are set out in a letter of understanding agreed upon with the Government for each operation.<sup>20</sup> WFP continues to strictly enforce its policy of “no access, no food” in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

50. The situation analysis by WFP indicates that:

Droughts, torrential rain, typhoons and flooding threaten lives and livelihoods every year and cause soil erosion, landslides and damage to infrastructure. The country does not produce enough food to feed its population, its emergency food stocks are limited, and it has scant foreign currency reserves to buy food on the international market. Hence, even minor shocks have a major impact on agricultural production and food availability. Even a partial disruption of the normal food supply can have serious consequences.<sup>21</sup>

51. Of an estimated 3.5 million vulnerable people, 2.8 million people in northern and eastern provinces — children, pregnant and lactating women and older persons, persons with disabilities and the chronically ill — are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, as are urban recipients of the public distribution system who are without kitchen gardens or relatives at cooperative farms.

52. In June 2012, the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200114, entitled “Nutrition support to women and children in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”, was revised in geographical coverage and extended for 12 months until June 2013.<sup>20</sup> The extension enabled WFP to continue to enhance the food security of vulnerable people in food-insecure areas and safeguard the nutritional status of women and children. The project was designed to target almost 2.4 million women and children in the 85 most food-insecure counties, mainly in the north-east. In partnership with the Government, WFP supports 14 factories that produce fortified biscuits and super cereals (cereal-milk blend) for children and women.<sup>22</sup>

53. WFP reported that it was facing a serious shortfall of commodities that was disrupting local production of fortified food and that, in mid-May, it had had to temporarily suspend production of fortified biscuits for children because the available food had been prioritized for super cereal production. WFP also added that it would run out of maize, rice, dried skim milk, pulses (beans and peas) and oil in December if biscuit production remained suspended.<sup>22</sup>

54. During its annual session, held from 3 to 6 June 2013, the WFP Executive Board approved almost \$200 million of food assistance proposed for a protracted

<sup>20</sup> See WFP Factsheet 2013, at <http://kp.one.un.org/content/uploads/2013/03/WFP-Factsheet-2013.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> See WFP/EB.A/2013/9-B/1, para. 3.

<sup>22</sup> See Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200114 Quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation Bulletin, January to March 2013, available at [www.wfp.org/countries/korea-democratic-peoples-republic-dprk/publications/monitoring](http://www.wfp.org/countries/korea-democratic-peoples-republic-dprk/publications/monitoring).

relief and recovery operation to provide nutrition support for children and women.<sup>23</sup> This two-year operation, launched on 1 July 2013, is designed to target almost 2.4 million beneficiaries and to enhance food and nutrition security in towns and mountainous regions, with emphasis on children and women, especially by providing locally produced fortified food.

### **C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

55. FAO continues to support government efforts to increase agricultural productivity and improve food security through the implementation of development and emergency/rehabilitation projects.<sup>24</sup> It is currently implementing nine projects, which include: (a) two technical cooperation programme projects: sweet sorghum and pest control, with a total budget of \$715,000 from FAO internal funding; (b) three agricultural projects: seed production; reduction of post-harvest losses; and strengthening of food and agriculture information systems, with a total budget of approximately \$5.2 million funded by UNDP; (c) three emergency and rehabilitation projects: seed potato multiplication and construction of storage facilities; provision of plastic sheets; and enhancing food security through conservation agriculture and double cropping, with a total budget of \$3.53 million funded by the Government of Sweden, the European Union, and the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund; and (d) one special food security project, with a budget of \$800,000 funded by the Government of Italy.

56. The FAO country programming framework for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the period 2012-2015, in synergy with the development priorities set in the United Nations strategic framework (2011-2015) for the country, defines five FAO priorities for technical cooperation with the Government: strengthening national food and nutritional security; improving natural resource management; improving rural livelihood; coping with climate change; and strengthening institutional capacity for agricultural research, extension and administration. It also provides for the ways in which FAO can best assist the Government in meeting its development priorities.

### **D. World Health Organization**

57. WHO operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea annually cover all 208 counties in all 10 provinces, including more than 7,000 Ri-hospitals/clinics (rural hospitals/clinics) in county subdivisions and all hospitals at the county, provincial and central levels, including general, maternity, specialized and emergency hospitals, medical universities, the Academy of Traditional Medicine and blood centres and laboratories.<sup>25</sup>

58. The WHO country cooperative strategy in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the period 2009-2013 accords priority to five main strategic areas, including strengthening the public health system to further develop capacity for

---

<sup>23</sup> See WFP/EB.A/2013/9-B/1.

<sup>24</sup> See FAO Factsheet 2013, at <http://kp.one.un.org/content/uploads/2013/03/FAO-Factsheet-2013.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> See WHO Factsheet 2013, at <http://kp.one.un.org/country-team/who/>.

policy, planning and improvement in service delivery; addressing women's and children's health; sustaining achievements made in tackling communicable diseases; addressing risk factors in order to decrease the prevalence of non-communicable diseases; and addressing the environmental determinants of health preparedness and response.

59. WHO works with the Government through regular technical contacts with the Ministry of Public Health. Key activities through joint collaboration include successful facilitation of global health initiatives such as the Global Fund and the GAVI Alliance; provision of support to the Ministry in addressing newly emerging communicable diseases such as influenza A (H1N1) and vaccine-preventable diseases; provision of support to build up core capacity to implement the International Health Regulations; facilitating a safe blood transfusion policy; and provision of technical support for capacity-building through fellowships and study tours.

## **E. United Nations Population Fund**

60. The current UNFPA programme (covering the period 2011-2015), aligned with the United Nations strategic framework (covering the same period) and the health sector midterm strategic plan of the Ministry of Public Health (covering the period 2010-2015), is based on the reproductive health priorities. They include the development of national reproductive health strategies and clinical guidelines; capacity-building for service providers working at the primary and secondary levels of health care; the expansion of family planning services in 11 counties; the provision of essential reproductive health supplies and equipment for 273 Ri-clinics and 11 county hospitals; and strengthening the logistics-management information system for reproductive health commodities at the central and provincial levels.<sup>26</sup>

61. Working with Kim Il Sung University, UNFPA also helps to prepare national experts in the field of population studies with the aim of strengthening academic capacity in demography by focusing on linkages between population and development. UNFPA also supports capacity-building of national institutions such as the State Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics, so as to analyse and use population data for planning and programming.

## **F. United Nations Development Programme**

62. UNDP is currently implementing several projects in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Three involve cooperation with FAO and are related to food security and rural development. Specifically, they aim to design and implement intervention in support of quality seed multiplication, capacity enhancement at the farm level and providing appropriate skills to increase productivity and food availability in an ecologically sustainable manner for improved rural livelihoods; to enhance capacity at the farm level in post-harvest management through the training of farmers, introduction and promotion of improved post-harvest methods and interventions, and awareness-raising activities for farmers; and to develop and establish a comprehensive agriculture information system with a bid to increase and

---

<sup>26</sup> See UNFPA Factsheet 2013, at <http://kp.one.un.org/country-team/unfpa/>.

facilitate rehabilitation of the agriculture sector. UNDP also recently signed two projects: a pilot project to support the socioeconomic development of rural areas and a project to strengthen ecosystem resilience and community adaptive capacity in climate-affected river basins. Other UNDP projects in the country are related to energy.<sup>27</sup>

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

63. **The Secretary-General urges the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take immediate steps to address the human rights concerns raised in the present report and in successive resolutions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.**

64. **The Secretary-General continues to fully support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and his tireless efforts in the implementation of his mandate, the limited access to information notwithstanding. The Secretary-General also reiterates his full support for the commission of inquiry. Its establishment is an important opportunity to obtain a more comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation in the country.**

65. **The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is urged to fully cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and the commission of inquiry, and to grant them unrestricted access to the country and to provide them with the assistance and information necessary to fulfil their mandates.**

66. **The Secretary-General encourages all Member States and all parts of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and the commission of inquiry with a view to advancing the promotion and protection of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.**

67. **Technical assistance offered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provides an important vehicle to enhance human rights protection and promotion in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Secretary-General therefore regrets that the Government has not yet accepted the technical assistance offered. He strongly encourages the Government to cooperate with all United Nations human rights mechanisms and to engage with OHCHR and to avail itself of the Office's expertise to improve the situation of human rights and amend national legislation to ensure compatibility with international human rights standards.**

68. **The Secretary-General also encourages the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to invite relevant thematic special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council to visit the country.**

69. **The Secretary-General is seriously concerned at the funding shortfalls facing the United Nations agencies in carrying out their programmes in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which provide critical assistance to the Government in safeguarding and promoting food security, nutritional status and the general health of its citizens.**

---

<sup>27</sup> See <http://web.undp.org/dprk/projects.shtml>; see also <http://kp.one.un.org/country-team/undp/>.



70. The Secretary-General therefore appeals to the international community to step up their provision of adequate and sustainable funding for humanitarian assistance efforts in accordance with good humanitarian donor principles, especially food and medicine, with a view to improving the humanitarian conditions and human rights situation in the country.

71. The Secretary-General also urges the Government to take immediate steps to secure respect for the rights to food and health, including the right to water and sanitation, and to allocate greater budgetary resources for such purposes.

72. The agreement of 23 August 2013 between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to resume reunions of separated families is extremely welcome. The Secretary-General notes that it is urgent to realize such reunions because the elderly members of each family continue to pass away, losing their right and chance to be reunited with their loved ones.

73. The Secretary-General appeals to the countries neighbouring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect the principle of non-refoulement under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, to refrain from forcibly returning persons fleeing persecution from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to provide international protection to such people. This includes indirect refoulement. The duty not to refoul encompasses any measure that could have the effect of returning a person to the frontiers of territories where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where he or she would risk persecution.

74. The Secretary-General appeals to the Government to show transparency and to share information with the international community on the status and treatment of persons who were forcibly returned to the country.

75. The Secretary-General reiterates the availability of his good offices to promote dialogue with the Government on ways to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.