



### **The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established for the purpose of coordinating economic, social, and related work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, functional commissions and five regional commissions. ECOSOC serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system. It is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress, identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems, facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation, and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has the power to make or initiate studies and reports on these issues. It also has the power to assist the preparations and organization of major international conferences in the economic and social and related fields and to facilitate a coordinated follow-up to these conferences. With its broad mandate the Council's purview extends to over 70 per cent of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system.



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## **FAMINE IN DPRK**

It has been reported that more than 3 million people out of 23 million have died from hunger in North Korea since 1995, the first of two consecutive years during which North Korea suffered floods. The flooding was followed by a serious drought, and the nation was hit by tidal waves in 1997. The succession of misfortunes brought about widespread famine.

The food shortage in North Korea has continued unabated because of the structural deficiencies of its socialist economy, combined with natural disasters and the disappearance of entire markets within the international socialist bloc. North Korea's cooperative farm system reduced farmers' incentive to work and dampened their productivity. Further, the cutting off of North Korea's oil supply, which had been provided largely by the former Soviet Union; a sharp drop in foreign trade; and the collapse of socialist countries, particularly the former Soviet Union, dealt a heavy blow to all sectors of the North Korean economy. Moreover, the government's expansion of farmland to hillside regions through bench-terraced farming was a major factor in the destruction of forestland, which increased the destructive force of the floods. The country's inadequate transportation system also compounded its deepening food crisis by making it difficult to ship food to where it was needed.

As the food crisis has worsened, the North Korean government has tried to minimize its responsibility to supply food grain through the central distribution system. It launched a national campaign, the "Arduous March" (1996–1997), in order to overcome the worsening food crisis. Grain rationing by the central government was curtailed to the minimum level, leaving local authorities and institutions to make up the bulk of the shortage. Although there are regional variations in food shortage due to the regional self-supply system, food grain rationing by the central government was reduced to 300 grams (half a bowl) per day in most areas of North Korea, except the capital city Pyongyang.

It is not easy to confirm how many people starved to death during the "Arduous March" campaign. Based on interviews with 1,694 North Korean "food refugees" in northeast China, some people estimated that 3 million people (27 percent of the entire population of North Korea) died from hunger between August 1995 and March 1998. Before he defected to South Korea, Hwang Jang Yup, the former secretary of international affairs of the North Korean Worker's Party, claimed to have heard from a reliable source that 1.5 million people had starved to death by the end of 1996. The Council on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Congress estimates that the total number of deaths from starvation to date ranges from 1 million to 2 million.

In addition to those who have lost their lives due to food shortages, many people are suffering from malnutrition and a lack of adequate health care. According to a World Vision report of July 1997, out of 547 North Korean children of two years and under in five nursery schools in the cities of Pyongyang, Wonsan, Sari won, Haeju, and P'yongsan, 85 percent were malnourished and 29 percent were severely malnourished. Although it is hard to forecast how the food crisis is going to be resolved in the near future, there seems no way out without a fundamental reformation of the sluggish economy.

### **UN visit and report in 2011**

After a landmark five-day visit to the crisis-hit country in October, 2011, the Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos has warned that more than 6 million people urgently need food assistance in the DPRK.

During her visit, Ms Amos met with DPRK government officials, UN agencies, NGOs, donors, and members of the diplomatic community in Pyongyang,

and spent two days on a field visit to South Hamgyong and Kangwon provinces to see some of the challenges on the ground.

During a series of visits to hospitals, an orphanage, a communal farm and a local market, she spoke with health workers, mothers, local officials, aid officials, and visited a family being assisted by World Food Programme. Ms Amos also visited a public distribution centre, a biscuit factory, and a medical warehouse.

“People in the DPRK suffer from a complex set of challenges including chronic poverty and under-development - structural causes with humanitarian implications,” said Ms Amos.

“When the Public Distribution System cannot provide enough food, there are few ways for vulnerable people to cope beyond the now very limited international assistance that is being provided.”

Ms Amos said she was granted access to all the places that she had asked to see, including a surprisingly vibrant market and a public distribution centre in Wonsan - neither of which are usually freely accessible to humanitarian agencies in the country.

“Travelling around in the DPRK, one cannot help but notice that people – children and adults alike - are generally short and thin,” she said. “DPR Korea simply does not have enough arable land to produce all the food it needs. It’s clear that new solutions are needed if we are to see an end to this chronic, seemingly never-ending crisis.”

Ms Amos noted that “during site visits, I saw for myself the positive impact of the limited humanitarian assistance being provided by the UN and its partners. Allowing all humanitarian agencies, not just WFP, access to markets, random access to homes and institutions, 24 hour notice of monitoring visits and the employment of Korean-speakers on their staff should be the rule rather than the exception.”

Ms Amos said the most vulnerable people in North Korea were victims of a situation over which they had no control. “For this reason, we are not in a position to turn our backs on these people, despite the many difficulties.”

## **A TIMELINE OF DPRK’S HISTORY**

**1945** - After World War II, Japanese occupation of Korea ends with Soviet troops occupying the north, and US troops the south.

**1946** - North Korea's Communist Party (Korean Workers' Party - KWP) inaugurated. Soviet-backed leadership installed, including Red Army-trained Kim Il-sung.

**1948** - Democratic People's Republic of Korea proclaimed. Soviet troops withdraw.

**1950** - South declares independence, sparking North Korean invasion.

**1953** - Armistice ends Korean War, which has cost two million lives.

**1960s** - Rapid industrial growth.

**1968** - US intelligence-gathering vessel seized by North Korean gunboats.

**1969** - US reconnaissance plane shot down.

**1972** - After secret North-South talks, both sides seek to develop

**1980** - Kim Il-sung's son, Kim Jong-il, moves up party and political ladder.

**1991** - North and South Korea join the United Nations.

**1992** - North Korea agrees to allow inspections by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but over next two years refuses access to sites of suspected nuclear weapons production.

**1994** - Death of Kim Il-sung. Kim Jong-il succeeds him as leader, but doesn't take presidential title. North Korea agrees to freeze nuclear programme in return for \$5bn worth of free fuel and two nuclear reactors.

**1995** - US formally agrees to help provide two modern nuclear reactors designed to produce less weapons-grade plutonium.

**1996** - Severe famine follows widespread floods.

Pyongyang announces it will no longer abide by the armistice that ended the Korean War, and sends troops into the demilitarised zone.

North Korean submarine runs aground in South.

**1998** - The late Kim Il-song declared "eternal president", while Kim Jong-il's powers widened to encompass head of state.

UN food aid brought in to help famine victims.

North launches rocket which flies over Japan and lands in the Pacific Ocean. Pyongyang insists it fired a satellite, not a missile.

South Korea captures North Korean mini-submarine in its waters. Crew inside found dead.

**2000** - Summit in Pyongyang between Kim Jong-il and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung. North stops propaganda broadcasts against the South.

Senior journalists from South Korea visit the North to open up communication.

Reopening of border liaison offices at the truce village of Panmunjom, in the no-man's-land between the heavily fortified borders of the two countries.

South Korea gives amnesty to more than 3,500 prisoners.

One hundred North Koreans meet their relatives in the South in a highly-charged, emotional reunion.

**2001** May - A European Union delegation headed by Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson visits to help shore up the fragile reconciliation process with South Korea. The group represents the highest-level Western diplomatic mission ever to travel to North Korea.

**2001** June - North Korea says it is grappling with the worst spring drought of its history.

**2001** August - Kim Jong Il arrives for his first visit to Moscow after an epic nine-day, 10,000-kilometre train journey from Pyongyang. Kim apparently dislikes flying.

**2002** January - US President George W Bush says North Korea is part of an "axis of evil", along with states such as Iraq and Iran. Pyongyang says Mr Bush has not stopped far short of declaring war.

**2002** June - North and South Korean naval vessels wage a gun battle in the Yellow Sea, the worst skirmish for three years. Some 30 North Korean and four South Korean sailors are killed.

**2002** September - Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visits, the first Japanese leader to do so. He meets Kim Jong-il who apologises for the abductions of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s.

**2002** October-December - Nuclear tensions mount. In October the US says North Korea has admitted to having a secret weapons programme. The US decides to halt oil shipments to Pyongyang. In December North Korea begins to reactivate its Yongbyon reactor. International inspectors are thrown out.

**2003** January - North Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a key international agreement aimed at preventing the spread of atomic weapons.

**2003** April - Delegations from North Korea, the US and China begin talks in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear ambitions, the first such discussions since the start of the nuclear crisis.

**2003** July - Pyongyang says it has enough plutonium to start making nuclear bombs.

**2003** August - Six-nation talks in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear programme fail to bridge gap between Washington and Pyongyang.

**2003** October - Pyongyang says it has reprocessed 8,000 nuclear fuel rods, obtaining enough material to make up to six nuclear bombs.

**2004** April - More than 160 killed and hundreds more injured when train carrying oil and chemicals hits power line in town of Ryongchon.

**2004** June - Third round of six-nation talks on nuclear programme ends inconclusively. North Korea pulls out of scheduled September round.

**2004** December - Row with Japan over fate of Japanese citizens kidnapped and trained as spies by North Korea in 70s, 80s. Tokyo says eight victims, said by Pyongyang to be dead, are alive.

**2005** February - Pyongyang says it has built nuclear weapons for self-defence.

**2005** September - Fourth round of six-nation talks on nuclear programme concludes. North Korea agrees to give up its weapons in return for aid and security guarantees. But it later demands a civilian nuclear reactor.

**2006** February - High-level talks with Japan, the first since 2003, fail to yield agreement on key issues, including the fate of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea.

**2006** July - North Korea test-fires a long-range missile, and some medium-range ones, to an international outcry. Despite reportedly having the capability to hit the US, the long-range Taepodong-2 crashes shortly after take-off, US officials say.

**2006** October - North Korea claims to test a nuclear weapon for the first time.

**2007** February - Six-nation talks on nuclear programme resume in Beijing. In a last-minute deal, North Korea agrees to close its main nuclear reactor in exchange for fuel aid.

**2007** May - Passenger trains cross the North-South border for the first time in 56 years.

**2007** June - International inspectors visit the Yongbyon nuclear complex for the first time since being expelled from the country in 2002.

**2007** July - International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors verify shutdown of the Yongbyon reactor.

**2007** August - North Korea appeals for aid after devastating floods.

**2007** October - Pyongyang commits to disable three nuclear facilities and declare all its nuclear programmes by year-end.



The presidents of North and South Korea pledge at a Pyongyang summit to seek talks to formally end the Korean war.

**2007** November - North and South Korea's prime ministers meet for the first time in 15 years.

**2008** January - US says North Korea has failed to meet end-of-2007 deadline on declaring nuclear activities. China urges North Korea to honour its commitments.

**2008** February - The New York Philharmonic performs a groundbreaking concert in Pyongyang - a move seen as an act of cultural diplomacy.

**2008** February - South Korea's new conservative President Lee Myung-bak says aid to North conditional on nuclear disarmament and human rights progress.

**2008** March-April - North-South relations deteriorate sharply. North Korea expels Southern managers from joint industrial base, test-fires short-range missiles and accuses President Lee Myung-bak of sending a warship into Northern waters.

**2008** June - In what is seen as a key step in the denuclearisation process, North Korea makes its long-awaited declaration of its nuclear assets.

**2008** July - Soldier shoots South Korean woman in the Mount Kumgang special tourism area of North Korea, prompting further tensions.

Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hold talks on Pyongyang's nuclear disarmament, the first such meeting for four years.

**2008** September - Kim Jong-il fails to appear at an important military parade, triggering speculation over his state of health.

North Korea accuses the US of not fulfilling its part of a disarmament-for-aid deal and says it is preparing to restart the Yongbyon reactor.

**2008** October - The US removes North Korea from its list of countries which sponsor terrorism, in return for Pyongyang agreeing to provide full access to its nuclear sites.

**2008** November - North Korea says it will cut off all overland travel to and from the South from December, and blames South Korea for pursuing a confrontational policy.

**2008** December - Pyongyang says it will slow down work to dismantle its nuclear programme in response to a US decision to suspend energy aid. The US move came following the breakdown of international talks to end the country's nuclear activities.

**2009** January - North Korea says it is scrapping all military and political deals with the South, accusing Seoul of "hostile intent".

**2009** April - North Korea launches a rocket carrying what it says is a communications satellite; its neighbours accuse it of testing long-range missile technology. After criticism of the launch from the UN Security Council, North Korea walks out of the international six-party talks aimed at winding up its nuclear programme.

Kim Jong-il attends parliamentary vote to re-elect him leader, in his first major state appearance since a suspected stroke in 2008.

**2009** May - North Korea says it successfully carries out an underground nuclear test, its second ever, drawing protests from the US, China and Russia.

It also announces that it no longer considers itself bound by the terms of the 1953 truce that ended the war between the two Koreas.

Defence Secretary Robert Gates says US "will not accept" a nuclear-armed North Korea.

**2009** June - North Korea proposes reopening talks with South on Kaesong factory park, which is run by South Korean companies, employs North Korean workers and is based just north of the border.

The eldest son of Kim Jong-il seems to confirm media reports that his younger brother Kim Jong-un has been designated the country's next leader. Kim Jong-nam was speaking to Japanese television.

North Korea sentences two US journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee to 12 years hard labour for allegedly crossing the border illegally.

UN Security Council votes unanimously to impose tougher sanctions on North Korea. Pyongyang responds by saying it will view any US-led attempt to blockade the country as an "act of war" and that it plans to "weaponise" its plutonium stocks.

**2009** August - Former US President Bill Clinton visits to help secure the release of US journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee, convicted of illegal border crossings two months earlier.

Pyongyang makes series of conciliatory gestures towards Seoul. It sends a delegation to the funeral of former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, frees four South Korean fishermen who had been detained for a month, and agrees to resume programme of family reunions suspended since early 2008.

**2009** October - North Korea indicates that it may be willing to resume bilateral and multilateral talks on its nuclear programmes at a meeting with visiting Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao.

**2009** November - North Korea launches a confiscatory currency reform that caused disruption to private markets and unprecedented public protests into the New Year.

**2009** December - US envoy Stephen Bosworth visits Pyongyang, reaches "common understanding" on need to resume six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear programme.

**2010** January - North Korea calls for end to hostile relations with US and vows to strive for nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

North Korea fires artillery into the sea near the disputed maritime border, as part of a "military drill". South Korea returns fire, but no injuries are reported.

**2010** February - North Korea declares four areas near its disputed sea border with South Korea to be naval firing zones, according to the South Korean military, and deploys multiple rocket launchers close to the frontier.

The government reportedly eases restrictions on private markets after the currency revaluation of 2009 wiped out many cash savings in the country.

**2010** March - Sinking of South Korean warship Cheonan, allegedly by the North, raises tensions on the peninsula to new heights.

**2010** June - North Korean parliament meets for a special session to approve a leadership reshuffle.

**2010** July - United States announces new sanctions on North Korea in response to sinking of Cheonan warship.

North describes planned US-South war games as a provocation and threatens a "nuclear" response.

**2010** August - Kim Jong-il visits China, expresses hopes for early resumption of six-party nuclear talks, in first sign of attempts to conciliate international critics.

**2010** September - As US President Obama signs new sanctions into law, the North makes a number of overtures to the South, including offer of more family reunions and acceptance of flood-damage aid.

Kim Jong-il's youngest son Kim Jong-un is appointed to senior political and military posts, fuelling speculation that he is being prepared to succeed his father.

**2010** November - North Korea shows an eminent visiting American nuclear scientist a vast new secretly-built facility for enriching uranium at its Yongbyon complex. The revelation sparks alarm and anger in Washington, Seoul and Tokyo.

Cross-border clash near disputed maritime border results in death of two South Korean marines. North Korea's military insists it did not open fire first and blames South Korea for the incident.

**2011** February - Foot and mouth disease hits livestock, threatening to aggravate desperate food shortages

**2011** December - Kim Jong-Il dies. Kim Jong-un presides at his funeral, is hailed as "Great Successor" and takes over from his father as chairman of the National Defence Commission. He is expected to take over the ruling party leadership early in 2012.

## **OVERVIEW OF WFP**

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Each year, on average, WFP feeds more than 90 million people in more than 70 countries. WFP is also the UN logistics lifeline, saving lives through fast, efficient and effective emergency

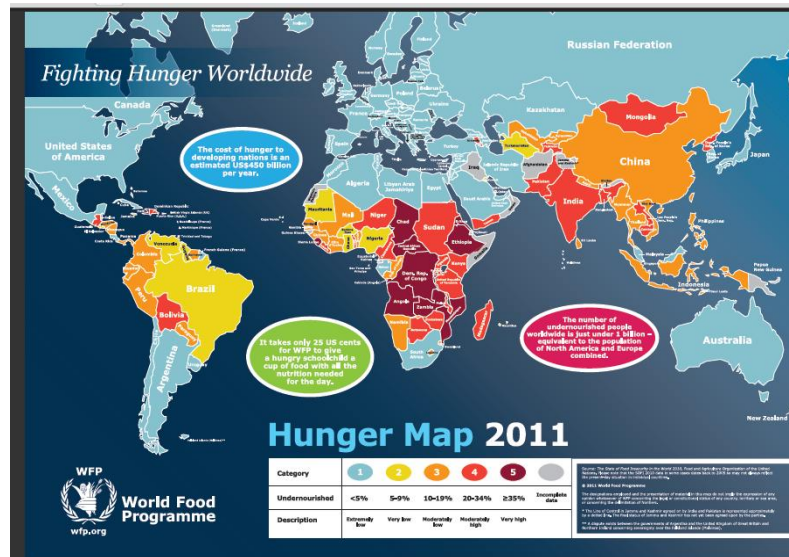
response. At any given time, WFP has 30 ships at sea, 70 aircraft in the sky and 5,000 trucks on the ground, moving food and other assistance to where it is needed most. WFP has developed sophisticated early warning techniques to assess the need for food aid in emergencies and instances of chronic hunger, meaning that its assistance is targeted to the poorest and most malnourished people.

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WFP is funded completely by voluntary donations. In 2010, WFP raised US\$3.8 billion. WFP is scaling up the use of cash and vouchers that allow hungry people to purchase food themselves rather than receiving food assistance. Cash and vouchers are particularly useful where food is available in the marketplace, but people lack the resources to buy it. The number of these projects has increased from five in 2008 to 35 in 2010, reaching 4 million people. In 2010, WFP procured food valued at US\$1.25 billion from 96 nations and purchased more food

than ever before from developing nations, a total of 2.6 million metric tons. WFP is forging innovative partnerships to deliver and manage assistance, including the use of debit cards, mobile phones and online facilities. WFP partners with more than 3,500 nongovernmental organizations to distribute food.

## FIGHTING HUNGER WORLDWIDE



**Horn of Africa:** A fatal combination of drought, high food prices and conflict in Somalia provoked the declaration of famine in areas of southern Somalia in July 2011, forcing tens of thousands to flee to neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya, and others to converge on the capital Mogadishu. WFP provided a critical life line to vulnerable Somalis in all three countries. Overall the response targeted 9.6 million people across the region. Existing school feeding and nutrition programmes were scaled up to keep hunger at bay and food-based

programmes to boost resilience had helped blunt the drought's impact in some areas.

In Mogadishu, WFP opened new hot meal centres and provided food for hospitals as well as general food distributions for internally displaced Somalis. An airlift of 250 metric tons of ready-to-use foods into Mogadishu helped stave off malnutrition for 85,000 young children for a month.

**Sahel Drought:** When a drought ravaged Niger in 2010, WFP mounted a major operation to deliver food assistance to nearly six million people. Strategic choices were made to provide specialised foods for children in their first 1,000 days – the critical period from womb to two years of age where malnutrition can damage brains and bodies permanently.

Each child under two received a monthly nutrientpacked basket of food – vegetable oil, sugar and a blend of corn and soya enriched with vitamins and minerals. To prevent this being shared with hungry siblings and parents, four million family members received a 'protective' monthly ration of cereals,

pulses and oil. The drought in the Eastern Sahel also hit neighbouring Chad, where WFP provided assistance for around 700,000 people affected by drought and crop failure.

**Pakistan:** When monsoon floods left one fifth of the country under water, WFP mounted a huge operation to provide more than seven million people with lifesaving food assistance. Air power was vital as villages were cut off and communities stranded. At the height of WFP's air operation close to 3,500 missions were flown transporting 12,200 metric tons of food and other emergency goods for almost 20 different organizations. Specialized nutritional food products were deployed from day one of the flood response. WFP has also pioneered a ready-to-eat food product – *Wawa Mum* – made from locally grown chickpeas and produced incountry. It does not need to be cooked or mixed with water and addresses malnutrition in young children.

**Afghanistan:** WFP has been working in Afghanistan since 1963 and is currently supporting vulnerable Afghans with food assistance in all 34 provinces of the country despite logistical and security challenges. In 2011, WFP launched an innovative voucher programme, starting in Jalalabad and Mazar-e-Sharif, where people receive monthly food vouchers to be redeemed in local shops. The scheme aims to help the poorest, most vulnerable urban families.

**Sudan:** WFP provided food assistance for around 11 million people in Sudan in 2010, most of them living in areas affected by conflict or drought. This assistance helped avert a major humanitarian crisis in southern Sudan when the number of food insecure people quadrupled and also kept malnutrition at bay in Darfur. Ahead of a referendum on independence, WFP prepositioned food stocks, and when South Sudan became the world's newest nation in July 2011, was able to feed returnees as well as people displaced by border conflict. WFP supports 4,000 smallholder farmers in South Sudan, through the Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot, to improve the quality of their farm produce and help them access markets.

WFP has pledged to continue working with the North Korean government and the international donor community to ensure that the needs of millions of hungry North Koreans are adequately and appropriately met. "The transition from emergency assistance to the promotion of longer term food security is an important feature of our operation and will be accelerated," said Richard Ragan, WFP's Country Director for the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea (DPRK). WFP's DPRK operation has suffered serious funding shortfalls for the past four years, depriving millions of its 6.5 million designated beneficiaries of supplementary rations of cereals, pulses, vegetable oil and other commodities for long periods. To date, only 270,000 of the 500,000 tonnes of food needed for 2005 has arrived. Ragan described as inaccurate recent media reports alleging that the DPRK government had asked WFP to leave the country by year's end. "Our counterparts in Pyongyang see us as a valuable partner and want the relationship to continue," he said. "But they have expressed a clear preference for development-oriented assistance over emergency relief. That shift is already well underway. Three-quarters of our current activities involve some form of capacity-building." WFP supports food-for-work projects which provide nourishment to participants and their families, create employment opportunities where few otherwise exist, and help build and rehabilitate community-level agricultural and urban infrastructure. The agency's provision of commodities for 19 factories that produce enriched foods for millions of malnourished children, women and elderly people has expanded the country's industrial base. WFP's focus on feeding pregnant and nursing women, and children in nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools is also a key investment in the DPRK's future. "We are discussing with the government and with donors how our assistance programme can be further refined to support development," Ragan said. WFP is by far the largest aid agency in the DPRK, with 40 international staff members and six offices countrywide. It has progressively refined its targeting and monitoring mechanisms since 1995 to ensure that donations channeled through the agency reach the neediest, Ragan said. "This infrastructure naturally has a cost, but it is a very worthwhile investment in the future of the Korean peninsula." WFP's substantial and longstanding presence in the DPRK has also yielded dividends beyond the alleviation of hunger, he added. "Increased mutual understanding and the building of trust and confidence have lowered all kinds of barriers. We project an image of the outside world that is sympathetic, supportive and reassuring. These are assets that must



not be squandered. "We are essentially talking about investing in ordinary, innocent people. Without sustained outside support of the right kind, the human capital of the DPRK stands little chance of realising its considerable potential."