

Minutes of the meeting of MSF DPRK in Pyongyang, 20 and 21 July 1998 (in English).

ACHIEVEMENTS	CONSTRAINTS
We supplied drugs and renewable supplies to the health facilities in 4 provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distribution lists were not respected (drugs went to the off limit counties without our consent) - some patients did not get the drugs (case of meningitis in Chongjin not properly treated) - big delay in the distribution of drugs due to logistic and financial reasons (delay in obtaining budgets) and also due to logistic problems of transportation in DPRK (same for other NGO's)
We are running a big program (enormous financial input), we are therefore considered as important and have more impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - logistic and financial constraints to continue a such big program
People know MSF and have a positive image of MSF	
Supervision to all facilities where we officially distributed drugs was possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planning was needed, given on Friday for the following week, has to be given on Tuesday now - information about accessibility of a certain county or facility came always at the last minute - is very restricted, very difficult for MSF to change if needed or if plans cannot be respected due to "security" reasons - it is a one-sided inflexibility that restricts our movements
The MoU has been respected in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the MoU was too restricted - often practical problems on the field - are we implementing the MoU? Access is written. - it is difficult to have changes in such country after only one year but there should be more political will to back up our program - not enough explanation about the aim of our work at higher level - we have little manoeuvring space
Identification of training needs could be done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited access to tools to do a proper assessment: patient files, morbidity forms
We could stay inside the country for one year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high financial input - judgement on the name of the organisation: political interest to keep us in the country - we are tolerated only - we did not make big statements - presence less impact than we hoped
MSF is present in case of an outbreak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - very unlikely we will be informed about any outbreak
International mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HQ do not know exactly what we do (empty page in the Dutch annual report) - different way of working in the 3 HQ, for establishing policies, human resources, finances, logistics - delay in our activities because of lack of common policy from HQ
Improve the basic knowledge about drugs and medical material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficult contact with MoPH [MoH] because FDRC was not in favour of it - no clear medical policy was made, MSF-B has no person in the medical department to follow up Korea - medical co-ordinator not accepted by FDRC before Jan 98 - evaluation about knowledge of MD and co-operation with MoPH was too optimistic - professionalism suffered from emergency approach

ACHIEVEMENTS	CONSTRAINTS
Opening of the fourth province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - should have benefited more from the experiences from the other provinces - we wanted to go there because it was far and difficult accessible, although WFP has an office there since Sept. 97
We have some idea about the general health of the Korean population, about their health systems, some idea about diseases, impressions but no clear figures in some provinces, at field level, it is possible to see the patient files and prescriptions, some access is possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data cannot be trusted - morbidity forms are extremely difficult to evaluate: often not correctly recorded (only OPD or only consultations where MSF drugs are used), case definitions are not the same, personal observation is more important - to care for other people is maybe not part of this culture, doctors have other obligations and do not work only in the hospital, there is a lack of commitment to care for the patients - too many health facilities and too much staff but they are part time only
The objectives of the current programme have been achieved: distribution of drugs give training about drugs implement feeding centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the hidden objective: evaluate the nutritional status of the population: has not been achieved - relatively few children were admitted in the feeding centres
Feeding centres have been implemented and some children benefited from it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficult care for severe cases - to motivate the doctors is difficult - correct management of HEM doubtful

What have we achieved in the programme after one year?

WHY STAY	WHY LEAVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the quality of basic health care • witnessing • emergency preparedness: quicker assessment, knowledge of the situation • nutritional rehabilitation: • training: update of the knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more long term objectives - no other people are doing it - has to be recognised at national level • drug distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no plans to take over by the government or other donors - can be reduced in time, less per province, less items - for training we need drugs - should be related to consumption data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency phase is probably finished, nutrition becomes a chronic problem, this is even recognised by the authorities during the round table conference, we have no reliable data, general programs can be assisted by UNICEF and WHO, coping mechanisms are being developed, no access to vulnerable groups. • in case of non-respect of the MoU • can we sustain the regime that does not take charge of the health care of its population and has other priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many goods came into the capital - new vehicles for the army • drug distribution at this rate is not sustainable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we distributed big quantities of drugs - new drugs are introduced - use of Koryo drugs is still wide spread

MSF PROGRAMMES NORTH KOREA 1995-1998



CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1995-1998

The main purpose of this chronology is to help the reader by reconstructing MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period. It is intended as a tool for this specific document, and not as an academic reference.

International	North Korea	MSF
1905 Japan takes over Korea.		
1945 Japan's defeat – Korean peninsula split in two by the 38th parallel. Soviet administration and troops to the North and the US to the South.		
1948 2 separate Korean governments are established: the pro-Soviet North (Kim Il Sung as Prime Minister) and the pro-USA South.		
1950 June Southern invasion by northern troops claiming to reunify Korea.		
1950 Korean war: North backed by USSR and China, South backed by UN forces (mostly US). 1953 27 July 1953 Ceasefire in Panmunjon: no armistice.		
1972	Kim Il Sung President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (and Secretary General of the Labor Party).	
1990 Early 1990 End of Soviet aid to North Korea leads to energy shortages, lack of hard currency-producing industries, and mechanised farming ground to a halt. Military budget maintained.		
1992	Beginning of food shortages.	
1994 22 July USA and North Korea agree to resume talks 21 November North Korea announces a freeze on its nuclear reactor program.	7 July Death of Kim Il Sung – his son Kim Jong Il becomes the new leader.	
1995 23 April North Korea threatens to reactivate its nuclear program. 13 June USA and North Korea agree on deal for nuclear reactors. SK will provide 2 nuclear reactors to North Korea.		

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>11 December WFP director says North Korea faces danger of famine.</p>	<p>28 August Extensive floods in North Korea; government appeals for international aid.</p>	<p>4 - 9 September MSF exploratory mission in North Korea.</p> <p>3 October <i>Press release</i> by MSF Belgium, France/Holland: "MSF responds to North Korean government appeal for international aid."</p> <p>5 October MSF operational sections meeting to organise international intervention operations in North Korea.</p> <p>21 November AFP "North Korea Devastated by Floods, Humanitarians Group Reports" (MSF quote).</p> <p>Late December End of agreed MSF 3 month programme in North Korea. New programme negotiations with the government begin.</p>
<p>1996 4 January South Korean President Kim Young Sam reports concerns over a possible famine in North Korea.</p>	<p>8 February North Korea tells foreign relief agencies not to organize new appeals for flood victims.</p>	<p>January No agreement between MSF and North Korean government on a nutritional survey. MOU not extended.</p> <p>Late February - Last MSF expatriate leaves North Korea. - MSF coordinator to the press: "we can't yet talk about a famine but the situation is potentially serious and must be taken into consideration."</p> <p>April DPRK representative in Paris (M. Kim) invites MSF to visit North Korea again.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1996 16 April Clinton's visit to South Korea – He proposes four-party talks for a permanent peace agreement replacing the 1953 armistice.</p> <p>15 May US and Japan rule out sending food aid to North Korea.</p> <p>29 May IFRC appeal on famine in North Korea</p> <p>11 June Japan and South Korea pledge aid to North Korea.</p> <p>25 August US Congressman visiting North Korea says it is in desperate need of food and asks USA for more aid.</p> <p>30 September North Korea and American-led consortium agree to the elimination of North Korean nuclear arms program and the construction of 2 new reactors.</p>	<p>Late July Storms and floods in North Korea; authorities report starvation</p> <p>In 1996 Kim Jong Il publicly declares that only 30% of the population is needed to survive in order to reconstruct a victorious society.</p>	<p>20 April - 22 May MSF International exploratory mission in North Korea.</p> <p>17 May MSF HQs declines the explo team's suggestion to implement a programme in DPRK with no expats.</p> <p>31 May MSF France Board discussion on North Korea: some members opposed to "collaboration with a totalitarian regime."</p> <p>11 September MSF named laureate of the Seoul Peace Prize.</p>

International

North Korea

MSF

1997 26 January

Signs of a thaw between North Korea and South Korea; preliminary talks on formal end to Korean war.

23 February

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visits American front-line near demilitarized zone (DMZ), which separates the two, and declares peace is dependent on North Korea.

4 - 26 March

ECHO visit to North Korea; small scale nutritional assessment reveals seriousness of nutritional situation.

8 May

Japanese officials say USA and South Korea will not give substantial food aid to North Korea unless it agrees to join peace talks.

12 May

South Korean Red Cross announces shipping of 15,000 thousand tonnes of food to North Korea.

3 February

North Korea says floods have cut grain supply in half.

29 March

North Korea officially requests food aid from SK and USA.

8 April

North Korea makes deal to buy US wheat.

25 February - 8 March

MSF barley seeds delivery programme.

20 April

MSF proposal to North Korean representative in France to send a medical team to assess medical and nutritional aid needs.

14 May

North Korean representative in Paris tells MSF that North Korean government doesn't want any more assessments but wants concrete aid.

International

North Korea

MSF

1997

18 June

North Korean Ministry of Armed Forces spokesperson says that Pyong Yang is ready for the final battle against the USA and South Korea.

1 July

North Korea agrees to hold talks with SK, USA, and China to negotiate peace.

15 July

USA agrees to donate \$27 million worth of surplus grain to help North Korea cope with food shortages.

6 August

North Korea joins talks with South Korea, USA, and China to formally end war and ease tensions in Korean peninsula.

8 August

NYT Editorial says USA should take lead in famine relief efforts for North Korea.

9 August

UN says 80,000 children are dying in North Korea.

24 May - 4 June

MSF exploratory mission in Ichon, Unpa, Pakchon, Huichon and Pyongyang maternities.

5 June

Start of a one month programme: Unpa, Pakchon and Huichon counties with MSFF as the lead programme manager.

June

MSF France food unit visits NK to assess the barley crops.

3 July

MSF signs an MOU with the government of North Korea valid for 1 year: large-scale nutritional rehabilitation, drug and medical equipment distribution, and training in South Pyongyang, North Hwangae, Kangwon.

5 August

Relief teams say North Korea faces vast drought emergency.

International

North Korea

MSF

1997 14 August

US congressmen visit to North Korea:

- say some food aid diverted to military,
- will seek measures to ensure future US food aid goes to hungry people,
- agree on more food aid.

20 August

Western nations give North Korea two nuclear reactors. North Korea gives up older reactors that could be used to make nuclear arms.

15 September

World Vision reports North Korean famine may be killing 15% in towns.

9 October

Kim Jong Il new Secretary of Peoples' Labour Party.

3 October - 11 November

William Claus (programme manager MSFB) visit to DPRK.

Late October-Early November

Intersectional debates on geographical extension and possible external communication.

22 October

Decision of explo mission in North Hamyong to extend the programme under MSF B (with FDRC agreement) but MSF F/H disagree.

24 November

Extension officially authorised: 59 counties, 12 expatriates.

November

MSF team discovers socially disabled children.

Late November Early December

Eric Goemaere, MSF B Executive Director, visits North Korea.

7 December

Press conference with Eric Goemaere in Hong Kong – **press release** : "The Health System in North Korea has Collapsed - Help is Needed Urgently but Needs Careful Distribution and Training of Staff."

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1997</p>		<p>9 December <i>Press conference</i> with Eric Goemaere in Brussels.</p> <p>December MSFF China team starts receiving information on the North Korean refugees on China-North Korea border.</p>
<p>1998</p> <p>7 January WFP appeals for \$378 million to feed nearly a third of North Korea's people.</p> <p>5 February USA announces \$75 million food aid to 1/3 of North Korean population.</p> <p>February First massive arrivals of North Korean refugees on the North Korea/China border.</p> <p><i>Korean Buddhist Sharing Movement</i> publishes North Korean refugees accounts reporting a large-scale famine in North Korea.</p>	<p>3 March North Korean officials say food stocks will run out by mid-March and risks of famine.</p>	<p>January Argument within MSF about an article on North Korea in MSF France internal newspaper.</p> <p>31 January MSF France Board advises an evaluation of programmes in North Korea.</p> <p>February Letter from Tony Hall, US Congressman to MSF asking for support of his campaign to increase US food aid to North Korea.</p> <p>February MSF programme starts in North Hamyong province.</p> <p>11 February MSF Hong Kong suggests an assessment on the China/North Korea border and in North Korean hospitals where MSF is working.</p> <p>8 March Start of MSF/DPRK negotiations on possible activities after end of current MOU.</p> <p>10 - 20 March MSFF's Pierre Salignon, programme manager and Philippe Biberson, President visit North Korea. They announce to DPRK that MSF will not continue working under the current conditions.</p>

International

North Korea

MSF

1998

Last two weeks March

MSF China team collects testimonies from refugees on the China/North Korean border – report transmitted to press correspondent in Beijing.

Late March

Pim de Graaf, MSF Holland Director of Operations visits North Korea.

Late March

Draft of external communication plan on North Korea by MSF B and MSF International - finally abandoned.

1 April

'North Korea, a Manipulated Famine' in *Libération* quotes Philippe Biberson, MSF F President.

8 April

Refugees' accounts transmitted to MSF F programme manager, then to MSF B&H programme managers.

9 April

Programme managers decision to stop distribution and to renegotiate programmes and freezing of refugee accounts circulation.

9 April

MSF Belgium Executive Director's letter to DPRK: "this news is not produced by any official MSF press release."

11 April

Refugee's accounts published with MSF quote in *South China Morning Post* (Beijing), *Le Figaro* (Paris), cannibalism mentioned.

13 April

New York Times MSF statement on North Korea is more dire than WFP.

23 April

US NGOs ask MSF for more coordination on North Korea and blame its statements.

24 April

FDRC letter to MSF disagrees with MSF statements.

International**North Korea****MSF****1998****Late April**

North Korea principle agreement on WFP, UNICEF, and ECHO nutritional assessment.

19 May

WFP director announces aid to North Korea will stop if there is no access to the entire country.

14 June

WFP and FAO say that food situation in North Korea remains precarious and that authorities don't distribute food aid.
Mid-June: Médecins du Monde MOU not renewed – MDM leaves North Korea.

23 June

Seoul seizes suspected submarine from North Korea.

24 April

MSF China coordinator report to MSF F Board. Decision "MSF stays and speaks out."

29 April

Programme managers decision that MSF must stay, support the team, and follow up the issues raised by refugee accounts.

May

- MSF B&F directors visit donors (EU)
- François Jean (MSF France Foundation) starts research on food aid to North Korea

16 May

MSF F President gives detailed annual report to the annual general meeting on North Korea.

29 May

MSF F Board discusses North Korean strategy to be applied.

9 June

MSFF Foundation conference on North Korea.

Early July

William Claus drafts proposal to DPRK for working in a smaller area with closer cooperation.

International

North Korea

MSF

1998

19 August

After a 4 days' visit in PY, US congressional delegations state that since 1995, 300,000 to 800,000 people died from hunger every year.

31 August

- North Korea fires a missile over Japan.
- Japan suspends all food aid to North Korea (lifted in Dec 1999).

In July

MSF team discovers "27/9" status earmarking people "rejected by society."

20-21 July

MSF North Korea team discusses achievements and prospects of the programmes.

24 July

MSF receives a one-month extension on the MOU and proposal from DPRK to deliver raw materials to rehabilitate North Korean pharmaceutical industry.

29 July

MSF Holland group recommends that MSF continue to try and gain access to the most vulnerable and create a threshold for departure.

10 August

MSF North Korea coordinator's plan to close the mission.

13 August

Programme manager decision to close the mission at the end of the current MOU.

19 August

Programme managers and Comms departments reflect on an external communication strategy regarding MSF withdrawal from North Korea.

18 - 25 August

MSF F China team collects refugee accounts on China /North Korean border.

24 August

DPRK letter asking MSF to consider the proposal to help rehabilitation of pharmaceutical industry.

26 August

Stormy weather ruins north Korean crops.

International

North Korea

MSF

1998

September

Kim Jong Il gets full power.

9 September

- refugee accounts with allegations of cannibalism published in *South China Morning Post*, MSF quoted.
- MSF USA challenged by UN agency and US NGOs.

11 September

Circulation to authorities and aid agencies of the Report on "socially deprived children".

15 September

US calls North Korean rocket a failed satellite.

20 September

Programme managers put an embargo until 30 September on MSF message regarding withdrawal from North Korea.

21 September

Start of a nutritional survey by UNICEF and WFP; they will not be able to enter 1/3 of North Korea.

28 September

Letter of MSF B/F/H executive directors to FDRC informing that MSF will issue a press release to explain its retreat from NK.

30 September

The USA :

- Promise to provide more oil to DPRK.
- Ask The NK authorities to solve the issue of access in order that MSF can resume its activities.

30 September

- Last MSF expatriates leave North Korea.
- Leak in *Liberation* (France) and *The International Herald Tribune* (USA) of refugee accounts collected by MSF.

1 October

MSF press conference in Hong Kong and **MSF press release**: "MSF Calls on Donors to Review their Policy in DPRK - Urgent Needs in North Korea but MSF Forced to Pull Out".

2 October

UNICEF/WFP statement: there is no evidence that aid is mishandled.

5 October

DPRK statement: "MSF statement is not consistent".

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1998 13 October WFP Deputy Executive Director says North Korea denies UN workers access to many counties.</p> <p>20 - 25 October Peace negotiations between North Korea and South Korea in Geneva.</p>		<p>14 October "Humanitarian Aid Frozen" by Philippe Biberson, MSF F president in <i>Le Figaro</i> (France).</p> <p>21 October MSF round table on North Korea in Amsterdam.</p>
<p>1999</p>	<p>12 May DPRK acknowledges 220,000 deaths due to famine.</p>	<p>February "North Korea a Famine Regime" by François Jean, MSF F Foundation in <i>Esprit</i> (France).</p> <p>April MSF F China team 'business' assessment trip from Beijing to Hamhung province (North Korea).</p> <p>3 - 6 May South Korean NGO meeting in Beijing asks MSF to resume aid to North Korea.</p>
<p>2000</p>		<p>24 April "The mystery children" by Marie-Rose Pecchio, ex-MSF coordinator in North Korea in <i>Newsweek International</i> (USA).</p> <p>29 September MSF F Board meeting update on North Korean refugee programme.</p>
<p>2001</p> <p>June The Chinese authorities organised a major crackdown on refugees on the North Korean border.</p>		<p>10 March Interview of Fiona Terry, MSF Fondation, on North Korea in the <i>Japan Times</i> (Tokyo).</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
		<p>23 July <i>The Guardian</i> (UK) and <i>The Washington Post</i> (USA) articles on MSF appeal to Chinese government to stop crackdown and forced repatriation of North Korean refugees.</p> <p>25 July <i>South China Morning Post</i> (China) article on MSF appeal to Chinese government to stop crackdown and forced repatriation of North Korean refugees</p> <p>30 July <i>Libération</i> (France) - Interview with Fiona Terry (MSF F Foundation) on the manipulation of the famine in North Korea. - Interview with Catherine Bertini (WFP).</p> <p>6 August <i>The Guardian</i> (UK): Interview with Fiona Terry (MSF F Foundation) on the manipulation of the famine in North Korea.</p>
<p>2002</p> <p>December The Chinese authorities launched a surge of repression against NK refugees.</p>		<p>February Opening of MSF F office in Seoul, South Korea and gradual extension of the programme toward North Korean refugees in Asia.</p> <p>2 May MSF F co-coordinator in South Korea (Sophie Delaunay) testimony to the US House Sub-Committee on International Relations for East Asia and the Pacific, regarding the plight of North Koreans inside DPRK and on the fate of North Korean refugees in China.</p> <p>30 August MSF F Board decision to support the refugee activities (including the sensitive human rights aspects) of MSF South Korean team (in China).</p>
<p>2003</p>		<p>19 January MSF South Korea <i>press release</i> "Urgent Appeal for the Protection of North Korean Refugees in China."</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
2003		<p>24 January MSF F Co-coordinator in South Korea (Marine Buissonnière) testimony to the Japanese Parliament <i>"MSF Pushes for Rights of Fleeing North Koreans."</i></p> <p>27 February - 27 March MSF F in South Korean campaign of humanitarian diplomacy toward western politicians and international agencies.</p> <p>June-July MSF H <i>"North Korea research Explo"</i> document.</p> <p>October Chapter on North Korea by Fiona Terry in MSF F book: <i>"In the Shadow of Just Wars."</i></p>
2004		<p>18 - 22 May MSF H's Dick van der Tak and Michiel Hofman visit North Korea.</p>
2006		<p>January Closure of MSF F programme in South Korea.</p>
2007		<p>March - April 2007 MSF CH exploratory mission on China/North Korea border and Far Eastern Asia: decision to open a programme for North Korean refugees.</p>