In terms of vulnerability to humanitarian crises, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has a “high” risk value of 5.2 on the European Commission’s index for risk management. This ranking is based on the country’s lack of coping capacity, exposure to recurring disasters and its economic vulnerability. In the past, the DPRK was affected by heatwave, floods/landslides which resulted in food shortages. The country also experienced drought last year during spring and summer seasons, and then by typhoon Lingling in early September. This was the first typhoon to make direct landfall in DPRK for several years. Since many houses in DPRK are constructed from simple materials and cannot withstand heavy rain, residents were left vulnerable to the severe weather. Meanwhile, deforestation has increased the risk of landslides, which killed more than 70 people and displaced over 10,000 in 2018.
Some 40 per cent of the population do not have access to clean water or adequate sanitation, and over 9 million people have limited access to quality health services—there remains a 40–60 per cent gap in the provision of essential drugs and basic medical equipment. In rural areas, two-thirds of households have no regular supply of water and the burden of water collection falls primarily on women and children. Around 6 per cent of the population spend more than 30 minutes each day collecting water.

Up to 90 per cent of the rural population, as well as 30 per cent in urban areas, are exposed to potential health risks from the unsafe disposal of human excreta or the use of unimproved sanitation facilities. As a result, much of the population is regularly exposed to the risk of waterborne diseases, such as diarrhoea—a leading cause of child mortality and acute malnutrition.²

**National Society profile**

As the leading humanitarian organization in DPRK, the DPRK Red Cross Society (DPRK RCS) is highly regarded because of its reputation as the first responder to disasters and by the success its Integrated Community Resilience Programme (ICRP). This programme covers health, WASH, nutrition, food security, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and institutional capacity building. While such vulnerabilities as food insecurity fall within the remit of a number of organizations, few respond using an integrated approach. DPRK RCS has a well-established network of Red Cross branches and volunteers, making both long-term and rapid disaster-response operations possible. In the period 2014–2018, DPRK RCS reached 48 vulnerable communities (approximately 360,000 people) through the ICRP. With seven disaster preparedness warehouses strategically located around the country, DPRK RCS is one of the few organizations able to respond to disasters in a timely manner.
Role of the country office

The IFRC country office has worked closely with DPRK RCS since a memorandum of understanding was agreed in the mid-1990s. The country office provides technical support and coordinates most communications with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, while working strategically to strengthen the capacity of the National Society. The office also monitors the ICRP and disaster-response operations and plays a crucial coordinating role for other international humanitarian actors present in DPRK.

Because of sanctions imposed on DPRK since 2006, most financial contributions are channelled through the IFRC country office. Therefore, the IFRC assures accountability and close monitoring of operations and programme implementation. The office provides timely reports to partners and donors as required.

IFRC coordinates with other humanitarian organizations and stakeholders in the country by participating in Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and inter-agency meetings as an observer. Moreover, IFRC actively participates in technical and sectoral working groups, which deal with food security, health, WASH and DRR. IFRC is a partner of choice and co-chairs the DRR and WASH sectoral working group meetings.

In 2020, the IFRC country office will continue to support DPRK RCS to implement the ICRP and respond to any potential disasters. In DPRK the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) mechanism has been described as a lifeline for disaster responsiveness. In 2018 alone, four DREF operations were implemented and, in 2019, two further DREF operations were launched for (a) drought and food insecurity, and (b) in response to typhoon Lingling. Through the efficient use of DREF, IFRC and DPRK RCS were able to respond to the typhoon before it made landfall. IFRC has also worked to find alternative ways for Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners to support disaster-response operations, and a call for support (C4S) was initiated in 2019 in response to drought and food insecurity.

Movement footprint

DPRK RCS has been cooperating with sister societies through a cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) since 2006, which is coordinated by the IFRC country office. Current CAS partners include British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross. CAS members meet annually to discuss and agree on annual plans, new projects, financial support and reports as a way of ensuring that impact is achieved with clear lines of accountability, as well as innovative methods of cooperation. Although DPRK RCS is working with many sister societies under the CAS, it is also exploring and expanding bilateral cooperation relationships with other Red Cross Red Crescent societies by adopting memoranda of understanding with New Zealand RC and Chinese RC. However, IFRC, through its country office, represents all National Societies as Federation members and as partners to DPRK RCS.
AREAS OF FOCUS

AREA OF FOCUS
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

25,245
PEOPLE TO BE MADE RESILIENT AGAINST DISASTERS SHELTER.

AREA OF FOCUS
SHELTER

2,340
PEOPLE TO BE REACHED WITH SAFE SHELTER LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC NEEDS.

AREA OF FOCUS
LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC NEEDS

15,147
HOUSEHOLDS WILL BENEFIT FROM LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT.

AREA OF FOCUS
HEALTH

3,000,000
MILLION PEOPLE TO GAIN IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT.

AREA OF FOCUS
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

12,563
HOUSEHOLDS WILL GAIN ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

• STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES •
• ENSURE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT •
• INFLUENCE OTHERS AS LEADING STRATEGIC PARTNERS •
• ENSURE A STRONG IFRC •
AREA OF FOCUS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

DPRK is a disaster-prone country with recurring disasters, such as floods, droughts, and typhoons. Vulnerability levels are high and coping capacities are low. Almost every year, disasters cause casualties and property damage, and limit agricultural production, with several years of drought and floods impacting heavily on harvest quality and quantity.

Disasters have increased in number over the past 6 years. In September 2019, typhoon Lingling displaced over 6,000 people and killed eight—many lives were saved thanks to the early warnings provided by DPRK RCS and the DPRK Government. In early 2019, DPRK experienced a drought and the worst food shortage in over a decade.

In the previous year, 2018, DPRK experienced a heatwave emergency in both South Pyongyang and South Hamgyong provinces, affecting crops and agricultural activities for 13,768 people. In August that year, Typhoon Soulik brought unstable weather and heavy downpours across the Korean Peninsula, leading to flash flooding and mudslides, with close to 60,000 people displaced. A week later, heavy downpours caused large-scale flooding and landslides in low-lying areas in North and South Hwanghae. Some 76 people were confirmed dead and 75 missing—mostly children presumed drowned and swept away in the currents. In addition to clinics, schools and kindergartens, over 3,200 houses were destroyed, with about 10,000 people displaced.
DPRK RCS has played a vital role in carrying out risk reduction and mitigation activities through reforestation, riverbank reinforcement, development of early warning systems and simulation evacuation exercises in target communities. These communities are now more resilient and better prepared for natural disasters. During 2014–2018, DPRK RCS volunteers, community and youth planted 7 million trees across the country. This valuable work will continue in 2020.

The DPRK RCS will scale up its DRR programme in 2020, as part of an integrated programme approach, with technical and managerial support from IFRC to help communities reduce risks and prepare for potential disasters. In the context of increasing risks of climate change, institutions and communities must be prepared for new extremes in weather events, as well as making day-to-day efforts to reduce risks and strengthen resilience. This includes promoting a broader understanding of the innovative forecast-based financing (FbF) approach to Early Warning Early Action, and assessing the feasibility of FbF in more depth. IFRC is working closely with DPRK RCS to constantly improve its working methods, increase its impact and enable vulnerable communities to enhance their resilience. Through a Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) assessment in December 2019, DPRK RCS will also develop a work plan to further strengthen its preparedness and response capacities.

**Outcomes**

**Outcome**

**Communities in high-risk areas will be better prepared and able to respond to disasters**

**Outcome**

**Communities affected by crises and disasters will adopt climate risk-mitigation measures and environmentally responsible values and practices**

**Summary**

- **Early Warning Systems Linked with Local or National Meteorological Systems**: 19
- **People Reached through Programmes on DRR and Community Resilience**: 25,245
- **People Reached by Awareness-Raising Campaigns on Climate Change Mitigation and Environmental Sustainability**: 17,160
AREA OF FOCUS

SHELTER

Many rural dwellings are constructed from inferior materials and are, consequently, vulnerable to damage from extreme weather. In response to these vulnerabilities, DPRK RCS has adopted the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) as part of its community-based DRR actions in disaster-prone countries. Through PASSA, community and individual awareness will be raised and techniques for strengthening houses will be introduced. In 2020, DPRK RCS will continue to support communities in their housing relocation activities, identify safe areas for reconstruction and provide basic building materials for 50 dwellings. DPRK RCS is the lead humanitarian agency in delivering emergency shelter assistance to people affected by disasters in the DPRK and will pre-position emergency shelter materials and tool kits across a network of seven disaster warehouses in disaster-prone provinces.

Warehoused stocks were important during the response to typhoon Lingling and these stocks enabled DPRK RCS to respond quickly. Some warehouses, however, are in need of repairs and maintenance to protect non-food items. IFRC will continue to support DPRK RCS and conduct regular monitoring of both long-term and emergency operation sites, as well as warehouses.

OUTCOME

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS OR LIVING IN CRISIS-AFFECTED AREAS RESTORE AND STRENGTHEN THEIR SAFETY, WELL-BEING, AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY THROUGH SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT SOLUTIONS

PEOPLE REACHED WITH SAFE AND ADEQUATE SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT

2,340

240,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT
Food security is a major concern across DPRK. As stated in DPRK Needs and Priorities 2019, 10.9 million people (43 per cent of the population), remain food insecure. There are many complex, intertwined reasons for the high rates of undernutrition in DPRK, including mountainous terrain (only around 17 per cent of land is arable), a reliance on traditional farming methods, and a lack of quality seeds, fertilizer and equipment. In addition, DPRK is increasingly vulnerable to droughts and floods, which can dramatically reduce agricultural production. Following heatwave, floods, and landslides in 2018, DPRK experienced the worst food shortage in over a decade in 2019.

The DPRK RCS food security and livelihoods programme will provide expert technical and infrastructure support to communities by assisting them to diversify their livelihoods and reduce the risk of food insecurity. The programme targets people suffering from malnutrition. Primary beneficiaries of the programme include families with children under five years of age, lactating mothers, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and farmers in marginally productive areas (e.g. sloping land).

Livelihood interventions are one of the high-priority components of the integrated programme, which aims to reach 15,147 people in 2020 through the provision of livelihood knowledge and skills training, construction materials for greenhouses, mushroom facilities, fish farming and food processing equipment. This will help to ensure food security and better nutrition for the most vulnerable people, and contribute to overall community resilience. Based on feedback from previous recipients, the introduction of household kitchen greenhouses for the most vulnerable households will be piloted in 2020 to enable them to grow different varieties and increase their intake of green vegetables. Previous project evaluations show that kitchen gardens are a very important source of food for the most vulnerable and that small greenhouses are expected to make an even bigger impact.
The DPRK RCS considers that community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) is a key component of the ICRP. Currently, CBHFA is being rolled out in 33 communities in 5 provinces to reach 331,601 people. In 2020, the DPRK RCS will offer 10 communities health services that focus on prevention, early detection and advice on how to access rapid treatment for prevalent community diseases, including water-borne diseases, acute respiratory infections, malnutrition, tuberculosis, malaria and other vector-borne diseases. DPRK RCS has a total of 4,225 volunteers trained in first aid who operate across a network of 1,700 first aid posts. In line with the DPRK RCS Strategic Plan 2016–2020, DPRK RCS will focus on road safety, targeting schoolchildren, who are prone to accidents. The promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donations is also a key activity of DPRK RCS, which wishes to scale up its ongoing Club 25 activities.

While nutrition has not been a core activity, it is gradually becoming more central through a project—Improved Nutritional Status through Strengthened Technical Capacity (INSTEC)—as well as nutrition and behaviour change communication workshops organized by DPR Korea Red Cross and IFRC. DPRK RCS and the IFRC country office will work more closely with the Nutrition Working Group and other agencies, especially UNICEF, as well as Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) centres run by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).
DPRK RCS is currently supporting the distribution of small essential medicine kits to around 500 primary and secondary health institutions in five provinces. DPRK RCS offers standard household doctor (HHD) training and midwife training as one of three focus areas of the Ministry for Public Health’s (MoPH) medium-term strategic plan for the development of the health sector 2016–2020 to upgrade the capacity of health managers and health professionals. DPRK RCS intends to continue supporting targeted health institutions in 10 ICRP communities with environmentally friendly solar heating systems, basic health instruments (hospital and midwife kits) and equipment (delivery beds, patient beds, tables, chairs, and anthropometric instruments (height and weight scales, and MUAC tapes for measuring children’s mid-upper arm circumference to identify malnutrition).

As natural disasters become more frequent and intense due to climate change, it will be vital to enhance the country’s capacities in terms of emergency health. This is closely linked with the DPRK RCS strategic plan 2016–2020 and the call for action adopted at the 10th Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Manila, 2018. The Health in Emergency (HiE) programme has two areas of focus: preparedness and response. In 2020, DPRK RCS will place greater focus on preparing human and material resources to prevent and control epidemics, one of the most significant health consequences of climate change. Recently, the National Society, in order to meet the psychological needs of the affected communities and its staff and volunteers engaged in relief activities, has added Psychological First Aid (PFA) into its HiE component with a plan to train staff and volunteers in basic PFA.

**OUTCOME**

**VULNERABLE PEOPLE’S HEALTH AND DIGNITY ARE IMPROVED THROUGH INCREASED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE HEALTH SERVICES**

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED WITH SERVICES**

3,000,000

**NUMBER OF RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS TRAINED IN EPIDEMIC CONTROL**

230

**OUTCOME**

**COMMUNITIES ARE SUPPORTED TO DETECT AND RESPOND TO INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS**
AREA OF FOCUS
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

According to the DPRK Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of 2017, nine out of ten people in DPRK have basic access to drinking water. However, in rural areas two in three households have no regular supply of water and the burden of water collection falls primarily on women and children. Around 6 per cent of the population spend more than 30 minutes each day collecting water. Around 80 per cent of the population have access to basic sanitation. However, 16 per cent use unimproved sanitation facilities, with a notable disparity between rural (28 per cent) and urban areas (8 per cent). Some 45 per cent of the population have a sewer connection and 40 per cent have access to improved on-site sanitation. But only 10 per cent of the rural population have a sewer connection, compared with 67 per cent of the urban population, and 3 per cent use a shared sanitation service.

Since 1999 the DPRK RCS WASH programme has reached 937,910 people in 257 communities, providing potable water, improved sanitation facilities (latrines and soak pits), and promoted hygiene awareness, with a new component of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) for adolescent schoolgirls. Additionally, water supplies to 404 health facilities have been rehabilitated. The programme has also provided educational facilities with solar-powered water heaters (geysers), allowing children in nurseries, kindergartens and schools to wash their hands in warm water—especially important during the harsh winter months.

As part of contingency plans, the DPRK RCS will prepare to support 20,000 families with WASH non-food items, as well as implement a specialized programme to provide water by keeping a roster of trained mobile water plant operators and maintaining a minimum of pre-positioned stock.

The 2020 operational plan takes an evidence-based approach, assisted greatly by MICS data. WASH provision and quality will be guided by the National Society’s approach and priorities.

OUTCOME
VULNERABLE PEOPLE HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLE WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE SERVICES

HOUSEHOLDS PROVIDED WITH SAFE WATER SERVICES
12,563

HOUSEHOLDS REACHED WITH KEY MESSAGES TO PROMOTE PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY HYGIENE
15,829

1,680,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES

The goals of the National Society’s strategic plan 2020, the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Manila Call for Action are all to encourage the National Society to work more closely with the community to build resilience with the involvement of different stakeholders, such as external, domestic and international partners. It also requires DPRK RCS to undertake its missions through ensuring proper leadership and coordination, with greater effectiveness and efficiency in mobilizing its human resources and based on a sustainable financial foundation and effective internal and external communications. In 2020, a national congress will be conducted, which will strengthen the governance, management structure and legal basis of DPRK RCS.

The integrated community resilience programme, widely regarded as its flagship programme, is being acknowledged as the most effective approach to build community resilience across IFRC networks. However, it needs to be implemented with results-based management tools, cooperation from stakeholders and the active mobilization of human resources, including communities and RC volunteers.

Although DPRK RCS remains deeply concerned about Red Cross branch development, branch capacity remains insufficient to train Red Cross volunteers because conditions do not yet allow for all Red Cross volunteers to receive relevant training.
IFRC will provide technical and financial support for the National Society so that e-learning for community-based adult volunteers and RC youth members can be implemented, and branch training facilities can be improved.

Youth engagement, as one of the priorities listed in the Manila Call for Action, will be encouraged by DPRK RCS in 2020. This will focus on sustainable youth-led activities in Red Cross dissemination and service delivery under DRR, first aid, hygiene promotion, road safety, and so on. One key priority will focus on income-generating activities, as well as scaling up the communications and marketing capacity of the National Society, contributing to both the sustainability of ongoing programmes and DPRK RCS self-reliance.

In 2020, DPRK RCS, with the technical support from IFRC, will mainly focus on strengthening institutional preparedness and building a resilient organization, improving volunteer management, RC youth engagement, resource mobilization and communication capacity, based on the results of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC), phase 1. Programme management will be measured for impact-based results.

Building on the work done in gender and diversity mainstreaming in 2019, the IFRC will help DPRK RCS to focus on people who face risks of exclusion, discrimination or inequity. In particular, disaster response operations will be analysed for their inclusiveness. The IFRC will also encourage local, evidence-based solutions, using research and best practice approaches to advance gender equality and include people with disabilities. New and existing research data will be disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and learning content and tools will be adapted to specifically address the risk of exclusion.

**OUTCOME**

- The National Society has the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems, structures, competencies and capacities to undertake its missions efficiently and effectively

- The National Society develops its communication capacities, as well as its domestic resource basis, through enhanced income-generating activities and resource-mobilization efforts

**PEOPLE TO BE REACHED**

- 19,403

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEER LEADERS PROVIDED WITH VISIBILITY EQUIPMENT/MATERIAL**

- 1,000

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TRAINED ON SAFETY/SECURITY, BRANCH MANAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**

- 2,000
ENSURE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT

In 2019, IFRC and DPRK RCS responded to two disasters, requiring a total of 1.1 million Swiss francs of DREF spending. In the response to food insecurity and drought, a call for support was conducted in DPRK for the first time. The C4S received support from several donors and may be a useful tool in future response operations where it is not possible to launch an Emergency Appeal.

It is the view of the DPRK RCS, IFRC, and UN agencies that climate change will increasingly affect communities in this region. Skills and knowledge on disaster preparedness and responsiveness will be updated through training and sharing learning and experiences. Training for both the DPRK RCS and IFRC human resources will include media work and communications, PMER refresher training and regional disaster-response team training. This will strengthen both the National Society’s capacity to face large disasters in the future, and position IFRC as shelter cluster lead within the Humanitarian Country Team.

Acknowledging the growing gap between available resources and the actions required to meet humanitarian needs, IFRC will continue to provide quality and timely support in mobilizing and coordinating international assistance during disasters, crises, and public health emergencies. Ongoing support for the National Society will include facilitating timely requests for DREF allocations, including forecast-based action, and the timely launching of Emergency Appeals as agreed with the National Society.
The IFRC country office plays a major role in influencing both existing and new partners on the lifesaving humanitarian work of the DPRK RCS. The country office encourages DPRK RCS to coordinate and collaborate with relevant UN agencies and local authorities in the areas of disaster preparedness and responsiveness, water supplies, sanitation and health services. The country office also plays an important role linking existing and potential partners to DPRK RCS, since there are no bilateral partners in the country. Through monthly updates all partners are kept informed of progress and any emerging humanitarian needs that require international support. The National Society will advocate for the inclusion of its integrated programming model within the sphere of humanitarian actors in DPRK.

Externally, IFRC aims to highlight the humanitarian consequences of sanctions. In June 2019, research was conducted in partnership with British Red Cross on the unintended negative impacts of UN sanctions on humanitarian work in DPRK.

IFRC is actively involved with various sectoral working groups, as Co-Chair for the DRR Sectoral Working Group, and as a member of other sectoral working groups, including health, WASH, and food security. It also participates in the Inter-agency Meeting (IAM) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings as an observer.

The DPRK RCS Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) is an important tool that brings together all international partners (currently sister societies) through the IFRC to work with DPRK RCS in mobilizing financial resources. The current CAS (2016–2018) was reviewed and reconfirmed as the appropriate cooperation platform to share results and impacts in DPRK, and a commitment document has been developed and agreed with CAS partners to cover the gap of 2019–2020. The CAS document will be further developed through a 5-year strategic plan, instead of the current 3-year life cycle.
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ENSURE A STRONG IFRC

To ensure a strong IFRC, efforts will be enhanced to fortify both DPRK RCS and the IFRC on key commitments, including:

- compliance with the highest accountability standards
- a results-based approach for all work undertaken in long-term plans and emergency operations
- adherence to IFRC’s Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Control policy
- strict observance of IFRC’s Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse policy
- development of evidence-based case studies and community profiles targeted at life-saving and humanitarian assistance.

In 2020 the IFRC country office in DPRK will continue to provide training to DPRK RCS leadership and staff, and technical support to programmes. It will also provide financial and logistical services, advice and international partnership coordination to DPRK RCS using international and local staff. This will foster a culture of problem-solving, risk management, compliance, accountability and transparency among all programme staff and National Society leadership, which will, in turn, establish the IFRC and DPRK RCS as partners of choice for the donor community. Community engagement and accountability will be prioritized by ensuring that continuous assessments, monitoring and endline evaluations are performed, with results and recommendations shared and implemented to improve future programming.

OUTCOME

THE IFRC ENHANCES ITS EFFECTIVENESS, CREDIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ENDNOTES

3 Note: The WASH programme works on an 18-month cycle, so figures correspond to this period.
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