



**Press Statement**

**Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman**

Washington, DC

June 22, 2005

## **North Korea -- U.S. Humanitarian Assistance**

The United States will donate agricultural commodities through the World Food Program and separately is prepared to support health and food security programs for the people of North Korea. Our objective is to help relieve the suffering of the North Korean people, despite our concerns about the North Korean government's policies.

The agricultural commodities will be 50,000 metric tons donated through the World Food Program's 2005 emergency feeding operation. Funding for the 50,000 metric ton donation will come from the U.S. Agency for International Development's PL-480 Title II program. The mix of commodities for the donation will be determined in consultation with the World Food Program.

The United States is prepared to support targeted health interventions for children and small-scale food security projects in North Korea. We will be working with UN agencies and non-governmental organizations with activities in North Korea to identify targeted programs that will meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

U.S. decisions on humanitarian contributions are based on three criteria: demonstrated need, competing needs elsewhere, and humanitarian organizations' ability to have access to all vulnerable groups and monitor the assistance. The World Food Program has informed us that it is attempting to implement a new food monitoring system to reduce the risk of diversion. However, even if this system is successfully implemented, North Korea would still fall short of meeting international standards of humanitarian access.

The United States again calls upon the North Korean government to improve humanitarian monitoring and access conditions in the country. Current restrictions imposed by the government continue to severely limit the ability of the international community to accurately determine the extent of humanitarian needs in the country and the locations of the most vulnerable populations. We will continue to work with the World Food Program and donor countries to urge North Korea to allow improved monitoring and access.

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