

## **Appeal for Food Assistance to the DPRK**

It is June. The season of verdure is slowly fading out and summer is actually starting to set in. The mountains are covered with full of flowers and lush landscapes.

We, Koreans, still remember what was like to endure June. June signals harvested food from last year is almost gone and there will be still several months before this year's harvest starts. June indicates we will need to endure hunger before the autumn.

Fortunately people in South Korea no longer suffer from hunger in June. However, the same cannot be said to people in North Korea. A recent report from the WFP, the FAO and UNICEF reflects the dire situation in North Korea. In March 2011, the WFP, the FAO, and UNICEF published a special report on rapid food security assessment mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. According to this report, North Korea has experienced a series of natural disasters, including floods last summer and unusually harsh and prolonged weather this winter, and this has resulted in much reduced harvest of last fall and this Spring. Further, the reduction of international food assistance in recent years has had a considerable impact on the current food crisis in North Korea. This report estimated that more than 6 million people in North Korea will be in dire need for immediate food assistance and nutritional intervention.

In February 2011, 5 non-government organizations (NGO) of USA visited North Korea and published a report that North Korea is in clear need of immediate food assistance. Especially this report stated that according to the government official in North Pyongan province, foods stocks are extremely low and the Public Distribution System will run out of food in June 14, 2011. In other words, in about a week from today, the Public Distribution System will be forced to stop rationing food to people in North Pyongan province, which will substantially increase food crisis in these regions.

These reports alerted several non-government organizations to the current food crisis of North Korea. Several religious organizations and non-government have urged South Korean Government to resume immediate food assistance and have pledged that non-government organization will also initiate food assistance and interventions to relieve the current food crisis in North Korea. However, it remains unclear whether the food assistance

and interventions from non-government organizations in South Korea can start. Non-government organization in South Korea needs a special permission from South Korean Government to contact North Korean or provide any assistance to North Korea. The current South Korean Government, having the hardline policy toward North Korea, has not been enthusiastic about providing food assistance to North Korea. Further, it is reported that South Korean government has opposed the US government providing food aid to North Korea.

It should be noted that not all the South Koreans agree with this policy of South Korean Government. Many South Koreans believe that it morally and ethically wrong not to provide humanitarian food assistance to North Korean because of political consideration. Many South Koreans believe that it will be critical for international society to provide humanitarian aid to North Korean to relieve the current food crisis.

We strongly appeal to the international community to urgently carry out food aid to the DPRK responding to humanitarian principles. We dare to say that this is what the most of Koreans would want. Humanitarian food aid from international society for North Korea will most likely influence the hardline policy of the current Korean government. South Koreans will do our best to help 6 million, vulnerable North Koreans suffering from hunger. Again, we hope you take part in our effort to help North Koreans.

**June 8th, 2011**

**The Voice of Korean NGO for Humanitarian Aid to the DPRK**