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UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Recommendation by the Executive Director  
Assistance to the Government of the Democratic  
People's Republic of Korea

Support for a national population programme

Proposed UNFPA assistance: \$6 million

Estimated value of the Government's contribution: Won 7.850 million (US\$ 3.6 million)

Duration: Four years

Estimated starting date: January 1990

Executing agencies: Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
World Health Organization (WHO)  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD)  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Government co-ordinating agency: Fifth Department, Ministry of Foreign Trade

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DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Demographic facts

|   |        |  |      |
|---|--------|--|------|
| Population Total (000)                  |        | Population density (/sq. km.) . . . .      | 190  |
| Total . . . . .                         | 22,937 | Average annual change (000)                |      |
| Males . . . . .                         | 11,398 | Population increase . . . . .              | 522  |
| Females . . . . .                       | 11,539 | Births . . . . .                           | 643  |
| Sex ratio (/100 females) . . . . .      | 98.8   | Deaths . . . . .                           | 121  |
| Urban . . . . .                         | 15,457 | Net migration . . . . .                    | 0    |
| Rural . . . . .                         | 7,480  | Annual population total (% growth)         | 2.16 |
| Per cent urban . . . . .                | 67.4   | urban . . . . .                            | 3.03 |
| Population in year 2000 (000) . . . . . | 28,165 | rural . . . . .                            | 0.22 |
| Functional age groups (%)               |        | Crude birth rate (/1000) . . . . .         | 26.5 |
| Young child: 0-4 . . . . .              | 13.3   | Crude death rate (/1000) . . . . .         | 5.0  |
| Child: 5-14 . . . . .                   | 23.7   | Net migration rate (/1000) . . . . .       | 0.0  |
| Youth: 15-24 . . . . .                  | 20.0   | Total fertility rate (/woman) . . . . .    | 3.23 |
| Elderly: 60+ . . . . .                  | 5.9    | Gross reproduction rate (/woman) . . . . . | 1.57 |
| 65+ . . . . .                           | 3.8    | Net reproduction rate (/woman) . . . . .   | 1.51 |
| Women: 15-49 . . . . .                  | 25.5   | Infant mortality rate (/1000) . . . . .    | 21   |
| Median age (years) . . . . .            | 21.3   | Life expectancy at birth (years)           |      |
| Dependency ratios: total . . . . .      | 68.9   | Males . . . . .                            | 67.7 |
| (/100) Aged 0-14 . . . . .              | 62.6   | Females . . . . .                          | 73.9 |
| Aged 65+ . . . . .                      | 6.4    | Both sexes . . . . .                       | 70.7 |
| Agricultural population density         |        | GNP per capita                             |      |
| (/hectare of arable land) . . . . .     | 3.35   | (U.S. dollars, 1987) . . . . .             | *    |

Sources: Population density on arable land is derived from two publications issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: FAO Production Yearbook 1985 and World-wide Estimates and Projections of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Population Segments 1950-2025, ESS/MIS/86/2; gross national production per capita: World Bank, World Development Report 1989. Figures for population, total population by sex, population by age group, age indicators, urban-rural population, and population density (/sq. km.) refer to the year 1990; figures for average annual change, rate of annual change, and fertility and mortality are the five-year averages for 1990-1995. These data are from the Population Division, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations World population prospects: 1988.

\* not available.

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## I. SUMMARY

1. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) proposes to support a comprehensive population programme in the amount of \$6 million for a period of four years, beginning in January 1990, to assist the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in achieving its population and development objectives. The proposed programme is based on the findings and recommendations of a Basic Needs Assessment Mission that visited the country from 13 to 24 March 1989 and takes into account the priorities set in the country's Third Seven-Year Plan (1987-1993).

2. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), a non-priority country for UNFPA assistance, integrates population measures into its comprehensive health, sanitation and development policy. The Government's approach to population is closely related to the goals for the overall development of the country and the requirements of the national economy. To help the DPRK attain its development and population goals, UNFPA assistance would: (a) support the first national census, to be conducted in 1992; (b) foster demographic training and research; (c) strengthen maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) programmes; (d) extend and expand an information, education and communication (IEC) programme in support of family planning; and (e) foster the development of women, population and development projects to improve the lives, roles and status of Korean women. The programme would also strengthen basic research on family planning in the DPRK in order to provide accurate information on contraceptive needs, examine the appropriateness of certain contraceptives and ascertain social and behavioural aspects of contraceptive use.

3. All the projects proposed in this country programme, as in all UNFPA-assisted programmes, would be undertaken in accordance with the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action; that is, that population policies should be consistent with internationally and nationally recognized human rights of individual freedom, justice and the survival of national, regional and minority groups (para. 14 (d)); that respect for human life is basic to all human societies (para. 14 (e)); and that all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so (para. 14 (f)).

## II. BACKGROUND

4. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has a population of 22.9 million in an area of 122,762 square kilometres. The population density of 190 persons per square kilometre is quite high, considering that 80 per cent of the national territory is mountainous and that only two million hectares (about 17 per cent of total land area) are arable.

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5. The DPRK has had family planning programmes since the early 1970s, integrating such programmes into a national maternal and child health programme carried out by the Ministry of Public Health. An information, education and communication programme in support of family planning has also been in operation, relying mainly on national and local exhibition centres for distribution of materials and holding of classes. Training and research in demography and population statistics, however, started only in 1985 with UNFPA assistance. Population data of the type and quality required for central planning and decision-making are quite weak. No census has been conducted in the DPRK in modern times, and population statistics are estimated from the information provided through household registration. According to United Nations estimates, the average rate of population growth in the DPRK for the period 1990-1995 is 2.16 per cent. The crude birth rate is estimated at 26.5 per 1,000, the crude death rate at 5.0 per 1,000, and the rate of natural increase at 21.6 per 1,000. The country's population is relatively young, with a median age of 21.3 years.

### III. REVIEW OF UNFPA AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DATE

6. UNFPA first provided assistance to the DPRK in 1985, approving four projects amounting to \$2.2 million over four years. Three of the projects (in the fields of MCH/FP; information, education and motivation; and population dynamics) were implemented. A fourth project -- to set up a production facility for intrauterine devices (IUDs) -- was not carried out because of the difficulties in obtaining an export license to the DPRK for the sophisticated equipment needed and because of questions related to the overall demand for contraceptives in the country.

#### Maternal and child health and family planning

7. UNFPA assistance has been used to support the importation of about 270,000 IUDs, thereby making it possible for the Ministry of Public Health to phase out the use of locally made Copper T IUDs, which had very high failure rates and caused serious side effects in some women. UNFPA funds were also used to import 160 mini-laparotomy sets which greatly enhanced the safety of female sterilization. In view of the very heavy reliance of DPRK health authorities on IUDs (government statistics reveal that as high as 80 to 90 per cent of all contraceptive users in the DPRK are using an IUD), the UNFPA Basic Needs Assessment Mission recommended that other contraceptive methods such as injectables, pills and spermicides be imported.

8. UNFPA assistance has sought to improve health and family planning statistics in the DPRK. These efforts have been only partially successful because of problems encountered in importing data-processing equipment and in recruiting an international consultant. Another source of difficulty has been the general unavailability of primary data, which has made training in data analysis almost impossible.

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### Population information, education and communication

9. UNFPA assistance was used to strengthen the capacity of the Health Education and Motivation Department of the Ministry of Public Health to produce and disseminate IEC materials. Such materials have been distributed and displayed in more than 12 health education and motivation halls located in various parts of the country. UNFPA funds supported the purchase of printing equipment and the training of technicians, both of which enabled the Department to produce pamphlets and posters in support of family planning. Moreover, the procurement of slide projectors, overhead projectors, cameras, and sound systems enhanced the effectiveness of the health education and motivation halls. Owing to the dedication of the Korean staff and to the capable technical backstopping and project management provided by UNDP's Asia and Pacific Programme for Development Training and Communication Planning (DTCP/OPS), this IEC project has proved very successful.

### Population dynamics

10. A UNFPA mission to the DPRK in 1984 found that the population data available at the time were insufficient for proper analysis of the demographic situation. This, in turn, made the formulation of a comprehensive population programme impossible. One of the mission's recommendations, therefore, was for the establishment of a National Population Centre that would collect, analyze and publish data for development planning. The Centre was set up in 1985, under the Administration Council, the highest executive co-ordinating body in the DPRK. The Centre worked closely with the Ministry of Public Health, the State Planning Commission, the Central Bureau of Statistics and other agencies.

11. UNFPA assistance to the National Population Centre included support for the services of an International Population Adviser, as well as for staff training both in the DPRK and abroad. After four years, however, owing to a generally weak background in the requisite disciplines, most staff members of the Centre were still only partially trained in demography and statistics. Four staff members were sent to China for a year's training in demography. About 40 staff members attended classes conducted by the International Population Adviser. Operations at the Centre were also hindered because of the considerable delays encountered in the purchase and importation of computers. Although requests for bids were sent out in 1985, the computers were purchased and installed only in 1989. Because of the various problems and delays, the Centre still has not been able to fulfil its task of collecting, analyzing and publishing population data for the DPRK. Neither has the Centre been able to perform its function of co-ordinating data collection and analysis in support of development planning.

### Other external assistance

12. Although UNFPA is the only United Nations agency providing the DPRK with assistance directly related to population, quite a number of other United Nations

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agencies have assisted the DPRK with programmes that have indirect links to population. For example, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been conducting a country programme in the amount of \$961,500 for immunization, education and nutrition of children. The World Health Organization (WHO), which serves as the executing agency for about \$218,000 worth of UNDP assistance, conducts a \$630,000 programme from its own funds focused on biomedical research and the control of environmental hazards. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is supporting projects to help enhance the role and status of women (a \$350,000 project in mushroom production as well as projects in fish processing). UNDP, the only United Nations agency with a resident office in the DPRK at present, has been supporting projects aimed at introducing modern computers into the country to help in railroad management. But restrictive international regulations make it extremely difficult to obtain licenses to export modern computers to DPRK, and the UNDP project has spearheaded development in this area. The strengthening of training in computer operations, repairs and maintenance arising from the UNDP-assisted project has important implications for future UNFPA-supported projects in the DPRK.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BASIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION

13. The Basic Needs Assessment Mission to the DPRK from 13 to 24 March 1989 noted the paucity of reliable population data and recommended support for the first census in the modern history of the DPRK, to be held in 1992. The Mission also recommended the strengthening of UNFPA support to training in demography and statistics as well as to population programmes of the National Population Centre, Kim Il Sung University, the Ministry of Public Health and the Central Bureau of Statistics. Data-processing equipment in the DPRK is old and outmoded, and the capacity for calculating and analyzing statistical data needs urgent upgrading. The Mission recommended purchase of more modern equipment; training in computer operation, repair and maintenance; and technical assistance in data analysis.

14. The DPRK does not yet have an explicit population policy, although development plans seek to balance population activities with socio-economic development efforts. The Mission hoped that once reliable population information became available, the DPRK would be able to formulate and adopt an explicit population policy. Specific population and development programmes could then be pursued and institutional measures adopted to help realize population and development goals.

15. The Mission observed the need to strengthen MCH/FP services in the DPRK at the national, provincial and local levels. At the top of the three-tier health system, the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital needs upgrading of its services for the intensive care of newborns and clinical cytogenetics. At the second tier of provincial hospitals, support is needed for basic equipment for operating rooms, labour rooms, nurseries, and family planning clinics, as well as for

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training of medical and nursing staff. At the third tier of country hospitals and rural area polyclinics, basic equipment and supplies are also needed, especially for strengthening MCH/FP services.

16. According to information given to the Mission, the DPRK currently relies on intrauterine devices for 80 to 90 per cent of all contraceptive users. The Mission recommended that a wider range of contraceptives should be made available in order to ensure that a variety of contraceptives would be available to meet individual needs. The Mission raised some questions about the feasibility of establishing an IUD production facility in the DPRK, basing its reservations on the relatively small number of IUDs required to accommodate married women of reproductive age, the lack of local sources of raw materials, and the difficulty of finding a supplier for the equipment and materials that would be needed to set up such a factory. The Mission recommended, instead, that UNFPA support focus on providing a wider variety of contraceptives, since this would not only be more cost effective but also help avoid over-reliance on the IUD.

17. The integration of population IEC activities with general health education and sanitation campaigns was lauded by the Mission. The Mission recommended, therefore, that UNFPA continue to support the project on publicity, health education and family planning motivation that was launched in 1985. The Mission proposed that an expanded IEC effort should reach to rural areas and use appropriate face-to-face communication approaches.

18. In the area of women, population and development, the Mission recommended that population information in the DPRK be gathered, analyzed and reported according to gender so as to enhance the capacity for development planning to specifically address the needs of women. The Mission also pointed out the need for a national focal point for women's activities. A number of income-generating projects for women were also recommended, especially in the area of small-scale enterprises and rural co-operatives.

#### V. PROPOSED PROGRAMME 1990-1993

19. The proposed programme was formulated in close consultation with the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The projects supported by UNFPA in the DPRK have been evaluated and, combining the results of this evaluation with the findings and recommendations of the Basic Needs Assessment Mission, the resulting situation analysis provided the basis for the proposed programme. All proposed activities in the new programme are designed to complement Government efforts and to help the DPRK achieve its population and development objectives. The programme is comprehensive, addressing the interrelated issues of MCH/FP, IEC, basic data collection, population dynamics and women, population and development. A portion of the assistance has been provided in 1989 to support pre-project activities prior to the start of the new programme.

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Maternal and child health and family planning

20. In the DPRK, maternal and child health is integrated with family planning, and these services, in turn, are closely linked to the overall health services provided at the national, provincial and local level. Nation-wide, there are 2,401 hospitals (including 14 maternity hospitals and 13 children's hospitals) and 5,644 clinics. In addition, there are about 60,000 nurseries and kindergartens that also provide MCH care through their own clinics. In general, preventive and curative medical services in the DPRK are effectively provided through a "section doctor system" which allocates responsibility for health care in specific localities to individual doctors and other health care personnel.

21. By 1993, when the proposed country programme would end, it is expected that a highly integrated, effective three-tier MCH/FP programme would be in operation in selected parts of the country. The proposed assistance at the primary level would focus on strengthening service delivery at Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, enabling it to serve as the main referral point for MCH/FP services nationally. This would be complemented by additional support to selected provincial hospitals at the second tier. Finally, special attention would be given to services at the third tier, where assistance to county hospitals and ri (village) hospitals and polyclinics would be extended in the form of training, basic life-saving equipment, and materials and supplies. Since the level of UNFPA assistance would be insufficient to cover the whole country, the programme would mainly support pilot projects in selected provinces. UNFPA proposes to provide \$900,000 of assistance in this area. WHO would serve as the executing agency.

22. In the field of family planning, a variety of contraceptives would be introduced into the DPRK to respond to the various needs of contraceptive users and lessen the dependence on the IUD. Pills, injectables, implants, spermicides and various barrier methods and hormonal contraceptives would be imported, trial tested and distributed in the country. The programme would also seek to strengthen the country's capacity in carrying out contraceptive research, especially at Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, through such activities as the training of professional staff, the introduction of modern analytical equipment, and the ad hoc use of technical assistance if and when appropriate. Another aim of the programme would be to improve the training programmes in provincial and local hospitals, focusing on such areas as IUD insertion, surgical sterilization, use of modern equipment and counselling. Finally, efforts to improve health and family planning statistics would be continued, with intensive training and the importation of modern data-processing equipment. An amount of \$200,000 is proposed for contraceptive research.

Information, education and communication

23. From 1985 to 1989, UNFPA assisted the Health Education and Motivation Department of the Ministry of Public Health by strengthening its capacity to produce and distribute health and family planning publicity materials. In the

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coming programme period, 1990-1993, IEC and motivation efforts would be expanded, with the aim of closely linking up with the "section doctor system" of MCH/FP delivery. The proposed assistance would seek to greatly expand the capacity of the system to reach more people, primarily through the training of service delivery staff in IEC techniques. IEC in support of MCH/FP would also be extended to promotional activities conducted in such entities as the Union of Agricultural Working People, the League of Socialist Working Youth, the Women's Union and the Federation of Trade Unions. Population education would be introduced into the formal curricula of high schools and would highlight the relationship that exists between over-population and such problems as unemployment, degradation of the environment and the need for social services. UNFPA proposes an amount of \$600,000 for assistance to the IEC project. UNESCO would serve as the executing agency.

#### Basic data collection and analysis

24. UNFPA would provide assistance for the conduct of the first modern census in the DPRK, scheduled to begin on 1 January 1992. The census will collect information on some 20 items, including number of people, age, sex, educational attainment, occupation, housing conditions, migration status, and so forth. Since the DPRK has had no experience in census work, a comprehensive training programme would be launched involving study tours, fellowships, short-term programmes and intensive practical training for personnel engaged in data processing. United Nations experts would provide technical assistance in such areas as questionnaire design, data tabulation and collection, data analysis, report writing and dissemination of census results. Assistance would also be provided in conducting a publicity campaign prior to the census. The proposed census project would specifically address several other problems as well. For example, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is quite weak at both the national and local level in terms of personnel and equipment. Computer facilities at the CBS are very old (1971 vintage), and more modern equipment would be needed. New computers would be provided at the central CBS office and in 13 provincial statistical offices. Moreover, analytical software would have to be provided at all levels of government, and staff would have to be trained in their use. Another very serious problem requiring attention is the shortage of paper for printing the questionnaires, for computer processing and for printing the census results. About 90 tons of paper would thus have to be obtained through various means, including, if possible, multi-bilateral arrangements. UNFPA would provide \$2.2 million for the census project. United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNDTCD) would provide technical backstopping.

#### Population dynamics

25. Since 1985, UNFPA has been assisting the National Population Centre in Pyongyang in strengthening demographic knowledge and skills in the country. However, as noted above, to date, the collection and analysis of population

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statistics in the DPRK is hampered by a general inaccessibility to statistical information. Recent statements by the Government, however, suggest that this may be changing, and if current trends persist, it is expected that by the end of the proposed programme (1993) DPRK population data would be collected, analyzed and freely exchanged internationally.

26. A critical need in the DPRK is the education and training of professional demographers who can do research, teach and train others. In order to improve this situation, in addition to support for the National Population Centre, UNFPA assistance would be used to upgrade an institution currently based in the Economics Department of Kim Il Sung University to the status of a Demography and Statistics Unit. In so doing, by 1993, a course of studies leading to a post-graduate degree in Demography and Statistics would be in operation at Kim Il Sung University. Courses in demography would also be required of students in the faculties of economics, political science, sociology and other related sciences. To achieve these goals, UNFPA would provide resources for fellowships and training abroad, computers, library books and materials, office equipment and other inputs. Technical assistance by both long-term and short-term advisers would be needed. Intensive language training for students selected for studies abroad would also be provided in co-operation with UNDP and other United Nations agencies that have programmes in the DPRK. An amount of \$1.1 million is proposed to support the activities in this sector. UNDTCD would serve as the executing agency.

#### Women, population and development

27. Women have been and continue to be crucial in the transformation of Korean society. However, despite the formal commitment to gender equality on the part of the Government, women in the DPRK still have lower status, lower pay and a lesser role in decision-making than men do. To help improve the role and status of women in the DPRK, all the activities supported under the UNFPA-assisted programme would be assessed in regard to their direct or indirect effects and impact on the lives of women. For example, all data collected, whether through the census or other means, would be disaggregated and analyzed according to gender in order to provide a firm basis for development planning that would be sensitive to the needs of women. An institutional focal point for women in development activities would be set up at the highest levels of Government to help co-ordinate the role of women in development efforts. Moreover, projects designed to create and promote income-generating activities for women would be set up in selected service and light industries. This would be supported by a revolving fund that would support investments in enterprises managed by women and in firms where the majority of workers are women and/or which also produce items directly beneficial to women. In such projects, training and education opportunities would be linked with production so as to enable women to become part of mainstream development activities. Pilot projects would also be set up to develop small-scale enterprises on co-operative farms in areas where women in the DPRK play an important role such as crop production and processing of agricultural products. UNFPA proposes an amount of \$600,000 for activities in this sector. FAO would provide technical backstopping.

Programme reserve

28. An amount of \$400,000 would be held in reserve for new proposals that would be developed within the framework of the proposed programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

29. UNFPA-supported activities in the DPRK are currently managed by the Office of the UNFPA Representative in Pyongyang, with technical backstopping provided by the UNFPA Country Director's Office in Beijing, China. The standard processes and procedures evolved by UNFPA for the monitoring and evaluation of programme activities would be used in the DPRK to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the programme. Individual projects would have monitoring and evaluation components built into their activities. The preparation of periodic project progress reports (PPRs), the conduct of annual country reviews (ACRs) and the routine tripartite project review (TPR) meetings would be built into the annual schedule of activities. Routine and special site visits by both the offices in Pyongyang and Beijing as well as by representatives from UNFPA headquarters would also help to assure the smooth implementation of projects. Technical backstopping by executing agencies would help to assure that both substantive and financial/managerial aspects of project activities would be regularly monitored and evaluated.

Programme co-ordination and management

30. The main government agency in charge of co-ordinating the formulation of multilateral programmes in the DPRK is the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Once the country programme is approved by the Department, co-ordination of the implementation becomes the responsibility of the Fifth Department of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Unfortunately, in both offices, the units in charge of programme co-ordination lack staff to oversee the implementation of population programmes. Nor do they have adequate office and communication equipment and data-processing facilities to carry out their tasks well. To help strengthen co-ordination in the DPRK, therefore, UNFPA and the Government would jointly have to provide resources for equipment, computers and training of professional and other staff members. To be effective, a National Programme Officer would be needed in the UNFPA office in Pyongyang to look after all UNFPA projects on a full-time basis.

Financial summary

31. As indicated in paragraph 1, UNFPA proposes to support a programme in the amount of \$6 million over four years in the DPRK. UNFPA assistance to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the four-year period 1990-1993 by work-plan category is as follows:

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|   | UNFPA<br><u>regular resources</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|
|   | \$                                |
| Maternal and child health and family planning | 1,100,000                         |
| Information, education and communication      | 600,000                           |
| Basic data collection and analysis            | 2,200,000                         |
| Population dynamics                           | 1,100,000                         |
| Women, population and development             | 600,000                           |
| Programme reserve                             | 400,000                           |
|   | <hr/>                             |
| TOTAL   | 6,000,000                         |

#### VI. RECOMMENDATION

32. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the amount of \$6 million for the four-year period 1990-1993;

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate the funds and to make the appropriate arrangements with the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and with the executing agencies.

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