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## WHO AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA CONTINUE SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH IN DPRK

**Seoul** - A World Health Organization (WHO) and Republic of Korea project to improve the health of women and children in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues into its second year. The US\$ 20 million project, funded by the Republic of Korea, will benefit five million people in the DPR Korea.

This project aims to improve the standards for health care and public health in DPR Korea, with a particular focus on the needs of women and children. It is also helping to retrain health professionals and improve county hospitals and Ri (community) clinics.

Specifically, the project is supplying equipment for 60 county hospitals and 1,200 Ri clinics, has brought in 35 ambulances, and 3,000 doctor's medical bags. It is also upgrading emergency rooms and delivery areas in 30 county hospitals, the laboratories of 20 county hospitals, four provincial blood centers, and blood transfusion services in 10 county hospitals. The equipment, vehicles and supplies have been provided in-kind by the Republic of Korea, or purchased internationally.

The project began early in 2006 when Dr LEE Jong-wook, the late Director-General of WHO, signed the agreement with the Republic of Korea. The project is slated to last five years in total, and by the end, the entire health care system, including around 200 counties and 4,000 Ri, will have basic equipment and supplies necessary for essential care for mothers and children. Advanced information technology will also be available to around 300,000 health workers. WHO is reporting on the project milestones and accomplishments monthly.

"This health project, funded by the Republic of Korea, is making a measurable difference in the health of women and children in the DPR Korea. People directly benefit when health workers are trained, and hospitals and clinics have the equipment necessary to help women to give birth, or save people who need emergency care," said Dr Ala Alwan, the WHO Director-General's Representative for Health Action in Crises, at a meeting in Seoul to renew the agreement for its second year.

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