

Torrential rains and flooding bring devastation to DPRK

13 September 2016 (Pyongyang): A total of 138 people have been confirmed killed and 400 people remain missing after remnants of Typhoon Lionrock caused heavy rains and flooding in the northeast of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) two weeks ago. The full extent of the damage is still being determined as some areas impacted by the floods remain inaccessible.

The heavy rains also caused the Tumen River to overflow, leading to severe floods and landslides, particularly in North Hamgyong Province. Almost 20,000 houses have been destroyed, in addition to schools, health clinics and other critical infrastructure. Floodwaters have destroyed agricultural land with standing crops nearing harvest largely unsalvageable, livestock lost and kitchen gardens destroyed. An estimated 140,000 people require assistance, especially vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, people with disabilities, the elderly and children.

Following the disaster the Government of DPRK responded by mobilizing civilian volunteers and redirecting construction support to the impacted areas. UN agencies and international NGOs in DPRK are responding to the urgent needs and are providing immediate shelter relief, food, non-food items such as kitchen sets and nutritional assistance, as well as water purification and health care supplies. The Government has committed to providing full access for monitoring and follow up on distribution of relief items to the affected areas.

“The situation will become aggravated as winter is approaching and temperatures will rapidly plunge below zero degrees,” said the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Tapan Mishra. “The Government is doing its utmost to make sure that the situation stabilizes before the onset of winter and humanitarian organizations working in DPRK stand ready to support in any way possible.”

“DPRK has suffered from flooding in the past, but this is the largest disaster in recent memory and the impact is devastating,” said Mr Mishra. “We must do everything we can to bring humanitarian and recovery relief to those affected.”

Humanitarian activities are exempt from the ongoing sanctions placed on DPRK and UN agencies are working to ensure aid swiftly reaches those who need it most.

For further information please contact:

Marina Throne-Holst, Office of the Resident Coordinator, Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Email: throne-holst@un.org, mobile: +850 191 250 0130