International meeting : MSF presence in North Korea

Brussels, August 13th 1998

Present: Marie-Christine Ferir, Pim de Graaf, Eric Goemaere, William Claus.
Minutes: Daniela Cerovic

Back in April 1998 all sections present in North Korea agreed upon a common strategy as well as the objectives. Those were the subject of the discussion during the visit of William Claus in July 1198.

DISCUSSION.

After one year presence in the country MSF still cannot confirm the alleged severe malnutrition. The access to certain areas or institutions is denied and MSF has no manoeuvre space for any action. Therefore MSF has to react NOW (even in public by a press release) using the data of the 8 months’ study.

Is it conceivable to maintain our presence? Presence doesn't necessarily mean the permanent one but also the regular visits to the country! MSF could stop its activities but continue its presence.

Press release? MSF has to go public while having the expatriate on the spot in order to follow up the impact afterwards. Perhaps the press release may push UNICEF, PAM and other agencies to react by having a closer look on the situation and going into institutions.

MSF could organise a round table meeting with UNICEF, WFP and funding agencies in order to discuss their approach as well as MSF activities in the country. MSF could combine it with the study of François Jean.

CONCLUSIONS

We agreed upon:

- **MSF will close the DPRK mission.**

- **Press release** (end of August or mid-September) saying that MSF is leaving the country and mentioning the reasons why. The data will depend on the confirmation of the rumours about selling of MSF drugs in China.

- **Round table meeting in Europe** (2nd half of September) with UNICEF, WFP, ECHO, and the NGOs in order to share our information and to discuss the mutual approach in North Korea. MSF Holland is to organise the round table meeting.

- **Official letter** (within two weeks) to the FDRC mentioning that MSF is leaving the country on the 31st of October 1998 and signed by the president of MSF.
- **German money** still at the disposal in MSF Holland for North Korea will be used:
  ° for round table
  ° to pay the extra costs of the period which is not financed by institutional funds especially during the phasing out (to be defined by Marie-Rose and to see with Pim how the remaining money can be used)

- **North Korea follow-up** is to be done by MSF Holland in order to keep contacts after closing the mission.

- **Pipeline**: Everything in the pipeline will be sent but no new orders will be introduced.