Press Release

-North Korea-

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES RESPONDS TO NORTH KOREA'S CALL FOR AID

3 October 1995, Brussels: Following severe summer floods, the international medical relief organization, Médecins Sans Frontières, has responded to North Korea's call for assistance. This is the first time that the North Korean government has given authorization for a foreign organization to launch emergency operations outside their capital, Pyongyang.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) will send 10 volunteers and 61 tonnes of medical and logistical supplies to North Korea. The MSF volunteers will work in the provinces of Pak Chon, Hui Chon and Unpa, distributing medicines and basic medical equipment. Due to problems with access to clean water, there is a risk of diarrhoea outbreaks. MSF will work with local staff and authorities to follow the outbreak and carry out epidemiological surveillance.

Torrential rains in July and August of '95, caused flooding in 145 of 200 regions in North Korea. More than 5 million people were affected and 100,000 homes were destroyed. Roads, railways, health centres, medical stocks and water supply systems have been partially destroyed.

Two chartered planes with 21 and 40 tonnes of supplies for North Koreans, will leave from Bordeaux, France and Ostend, Belgium. The international team will include members from France, Belgium, Holland, and Bosnia.

For more information, please contact Vanessa van Schoor @ 32.2.2801881.