

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

KIM JONG UN

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Speech to the Flood Victims in Uiju County,
North Phyongan Province
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Dear inhabitants of the flood-stricken area,
How are you all?

I believe you must be experiencing a great deal of inconvenience and difficulty after leaving your homes to come to this evacuation area in the wake of the unexpected natural disaster.

Several days ago, after witnessing your plight on the spot, I ordered the Party Central Committee and the state to initiate an emergency response in the flood-stricken area. However, I have hardly been able to work at the thought of the flood victims.

Naturally, I have been receiving several reports a day, and these tell me that the victims' living conditions are fairly stable. Even so, not for a moment have I been free from worry.

I have come here to get a more detailed, on-the-spot understanding of the situation, to reassign certain tasks relating to the rehabilitation effort, and to have additional measures adopted at the national level to help you.

Several days have passed since the unexpected, terrible disaster condemned you to an abnormal existence, living in temporary shelters. I have felt ill at

ease ever since. In spite of my willingness to help you, I have failed to do so.

Although the whole country has turned out to render you assistance, I am still feeling anxious and impatient, as I have been unable to ease the inconvenience you are experiencing, living in damp tents and using poorly-equipped public facilities.

So, having seen that you are all in good health and showing little sign of the inconvenience you are experiencing, I feel greatly relieved and encouraged.

Our Party and government should have instilled strength and energy in you. Yet they are gaining strength from seeing you.

You have always trusted and relied on our Party and government. In these days of harsh trials, too, you are placing absolute and unconditional trust in them. For this, I feel great gratitude and pride.

I also realize more keenly what more I need to do, and how, for such laudable people who steadfastly follow our Party, devoting to it their pure loyalty and sense of obligation throughout their lives.

What I want to say first is that the Party Central Committee and the government of our Republic will always share the pain you have been caused by the disaster.

The people are the foundation and pillars of our Party and state and the starting point and focus of all their activities.

It is the mode of existence and activities inherent to our Party to draw closer to the people and share their experiences, the harder the times are.

At a time when the people are suffering a disaster like this, the place where the leadership of our state should find itself is the disaster-stricken area and the site of the rehabilitation project.

In extending to you once again profound sympathy, I would like to take this opportunity to outline the immediate measures our Party and government will adopt to improve the flood victims' living conditions and repair the damage.

The Party and the state are now focusing all their efforts on the rehabilitation project here.

It is not only here that has suffered damage, but also some areas of Jagang and Ryanggang provinces in the Amnok River basin.

In order to complete this project in the shortest possible time and on the highest level, the Party and the government have decided to commit colossal human and material resources to it, even though this means readjusting some construction projects of

national importance.

For us today, nothing is more important and urgent than to stabilize the living conditions of the flood victims and take permanent safety measures to prevent any recurrence of flooding.

As a preliminary to introducing these measures for fully restoring the flood victims' living conditions as soon as possible and eradicating the aftereffects of the natural disaster, a comprehensive and detailed investigation into the damage is ongoing, and the relevant sector is working hard to draw up a scientific plan for the recovery project.

A construction workforce over 130 000 strong, comprising service personnel of the People's Army and young people, is being assigned to the recovery work here in North Phyongan Province alone.

At the national level, a Central Committee for Repairing the Damage has been formed and has started work, to be followed by a provincial on-site headquarters for the recovery work; and the transport of the materials needed has already been switched to the emergency system.

Our objective in displaying this daring spirit, organizing work at lightning speed and striving unflinchingly, is to transform, beyond recognition, your

dear island villages and the northwestern part of the country.

Comrades,

The whole country is fully committed to the recovery work. But given the extent of the damage, it will take two or three months at least to stabilize the flood victims' living conditions by building new houses and repairing the existing ones.

In the meantime, the Party and the government must give top priority to doing everything possible to improve their living conditions.

To this end, I have been holding daily consultations with leading officials of the relevant institutions to discuss the measures that need to be adopted.

It is essential that a well-regulated system be established for distributing newspapers and other publications and providing every family with a TV set and installing one in every public place so that the victims will be able to keep up-to-date with the Party's intentions, and for ensuring that they get decent meals.

The biggest bottleneck in the flood-stricken areas is the living and studying conditions for the children and students.

Currently, some leading officials within our government, due to a lack of experience and

qualifications, are focusing so intently on the recovery effort that they are neglecting the education of and care for the children and students.

Needless to say, living in a tent or someone else's house until the completion of the recovery work will cause the children considerable inconvenience; in particular, their education will be severely impacted.

Also, the steps for providing health care are not going beyond supplying medicines, and no specific, realistic plan has yet been drawn up for offering medical services.

With regard to this, I criticized the officials concerned at yesterday's consultative meeting of the relevant departments of the Party Central Committee.

So, we are going to put in place an emergency system whereby, during the recovery work, all the affected children and students in North Phyongan, Jagang and Ryanggang provinces will come and stay in Pyongyang, where they will be provided with a safe and comfortable environment for their care and education, entirely at state expense.

The nursing, edification and education of the children and students are the most important of all state affairs, and must never be abandoned even if the sky were to fall in.

So, the state will take full responsibility for this while the rehabilitation project is ongoing.

Moreover, the state will provide care in Pyongyang for the elderly and sick, honoured disabled ex-soldiers and nursing mothers until new houses are built for them in the flood-stricken areas.

According to an estimate, among the flood victims' families there are 2 198 preschoolers, 4 384 students, 4 524 elderly, 265 sick people and honoured disabled ex-soldiers, and 4 096 nursing mothers.

Therefore, the number of flood victims who will be brought to Pyongyang will total over 15 400.

In order to provide this state emergency assistance, the Party Central Committee will organize a command team and ensure that the evacuees are provided with services in Pyongyang at the April 25 Hostel and the military parade training base.

It will provide temporary learning spaces for the children and students and organize interim mobile educational teams made up of teachers from primary and middle schools and preschool educational institutions in Pyongyang. They will provide the children and students with full-time education, once their vacation is over.

It will also ensure that adequate staple and

subsidiary foods, daily necessities and medicines are supplied, and that mobile service and medical teams are formed, comprising able personnel from key service units and hospitals in Pyongyang. This will guarantee that all efforts are directed to ensuring that the living conditions provided for the flood victims accord with the state's special measures.

Some mothers may be reluctant to be separated from their little children for several months, and some individuals may be unwilling to leave for some reasons, I think.

As their reasons may be personal, I will leave it up to them.

However, we are organizing this with the intention of doing everything possible to help the flood victims suffering in the unfamiliar areas and minimize their inconvenience. So, I think you can have confidence in me.

As it is the top state priority, the Party and the government will take full responsibility for the health and living conditions of the flood victims who come to Pyongyang, caring for them with utmost sincerity as their parents and children would do, and will make special and devoted efforts so that none of them feels in the slightest bit dismayed.

Another problem facing the families evacuated from the rehabilitation area is that they have no proper place to keep any of the family property they managed to salvage from the water.

Although they are showing no signs of it, the flood victims may be feeling extremely anxious.

So, for the convenience of the families that have been evacuated while new houses are being built for them, we should provide them with a place where they can keep their household belongings safely.

This will also be good for the families who are being looked after and cared for in Pyongyang.

Comrades,

We need to impress on our minds once again that the current rehabilitation project is not simply an undertaking for ourselves, but also a serious struggle against the enemy.

The enemy is now taking advantage of the fact that we have suffered damage to continue its foolish attempts to tarnish the image of our state.

It is important to inform Party organizations and working people's organizations at all levels, various educational networks and all the people of these facts, so that they have a correct understanding of the ROK scum bordering us.

The ROK's despicable media are desperately slandering all the socialist benefits and measures adopted by our Party and government for the flood victims, as well as the communist traits displayed throughout society, and claiming they are a means of achieving some sort of internal unity and a type of show. Moreover, in their frantic manoeuvres to slander our government and system, they are also inventing such lies as the number of missing persons in the affected areas exceeds 1 000, and that its intelligence authorities have found that several helicopters crashed during rescue missions.

Worse still, they are spreading the baseless rumour that the V-day celebrations in Pyongyang on the 27th of last month were held while people were losing their lives in the flood-hit areas.

The rumour is widespread in the ROK society that its government is always late in responding to the various, everyday incidents that occur there, and because of this they are weaving this absurd sophistry that slanders and slights us in an attempt to hoodwink their citizens and stir up world public sentiment.

When I visited the helicopter unit that rescued you, I gave a full account of the rescue operation. This

included the crash-landing by one helicopter during the operation. I also expressed my relief that there had been no casualties.

The enemy even went so far as to say that I was reacting to the report fabricated by their media, because the casualties had been heavy and I wanted to cover this fact up.

What is the purpose of their persistent attempts to describe you, who are safe and sound, as missing or dead? There can be no argument.

It is a smear campaign and a grave provocation against our state, as well as an insult to you.

I have good reason and feel it necessary to say this about the media of that dirty, despicable country.

There is no need for us to produce separate information materials. The facts are clear and true, and the information materials are good enough to bring home to our people how filthy the enemy clan is, how old-fashioned and outdated is their way of fabricating a political smear campaign to tarnish the image of our state, what their ulterior motives are, and why we call them the enemy and scum.

No other country in the world has such media which do nothing but invent groundless and exaggerated lies.

We must be clearly aware that the enemy is as we see them now.

The whole country can, by referring to the actual facts, have a correct understanding of the enemy and cultivate appropriate feelings against them.

Our enemy will never change.

The current situation helps us to see the enemy's true colours, and we should make it an opportunity to form a proper attitude towards them.

Present here today are leading officials of Party organizations and government organs in North Phyongan Province, as well as officials in Uiju County.

I would like to take this opportunity to dwell on the tasks facing the regional Party organizations and government organs in stabilizing the living conditions of the flood victims and repairing the damage in the disaster-stricken areas.

The masters of the affected areas should play their proper role in the effort to stabilize the living conditions of the flood victims as quickly as possible.

As you have seen for yourselves, many of the flood victims in various areas, including North Phyongan and Jagang provinces, are living outdoors in the intense heat and sultry weather.

Of course, we built houses for the people without fail in the past however many of them were destroyed, and now the flood victims in the affected areas are living in hope, placing their trust in our Party.

Even so, the local Party organizations and government organs should never make light of the fact that there are people who have been left homeless and are living in tents.

They should ensure that supplies of food, non-staple foodstuffs and fuel, which are indispensable for their survival, are provided and never run out, and should adopt strong measures for providing them with daily necessities.

The provinces, cities and counties should improve the flood victims' living conditions by providing them in a responsible manner with the food and other materials they need from the reserves, and promptly supplying them with state relief materials.

They should supply the flood victims with a whole range of daily necessities, from bedding and sanitation products to such small articles as scissors, needles and thread.

They should direct close attention to the supply of drinking water.

Water is essential for people's survival, and

drinking water is badly needed in the flood-hit areas, where it is in short supply owing to the pollution caused by the flood damage.

Party organizations and government organs in the relevant areas should abandon their short-term approach, and take effective steps for supplying sufficient drinking water to places where the flood victims are living.

Public health and epidemic prevention are the most vulnerable sectors in the affected areas.

Wherever the flood victims have been evacuated to, it is necessary, based on their numbers, to install sufficient bathrooms, public toilets, rubbish dumps and drains, in line with hygiene standards, and effectively maintain them so as to eliminate any possible source of disease.

The regional Party organizations and government organs should commit all the available medical resources in their areas to caring for the victims' health in a responsible manner, supply them with as much Koryo and other medicines as possible, and conduct an intensive epidemic prevention campaign.

They should work proactively to organize and carry out rehabilitation aimed at restoring production and life in the flood-hit areas to normal.

They should conduct strict safety tests on the damaged houses and public buildings, and launch the rehabilitation project promptly, based on the findings.

A key factor in this is to check such details as whether the buildings that were submerged have suffered any structural changes and whether their foundations are strong enough. Also, thorough measures should be adopted to prevent secondary damage due to the collapse of those buildings.

Another important factor is to distinguish what needs to be built again from scratch from what is in need of repair. A scientific order of priority and plans for the recovery work should be adopted, and priority should be given to the construction and repair of houses so that the flood victims can move into them as soon as possible.

In addition, socio-economic life in the affected areas should be put back on a normal track at the earliest possible date. This should be done by pushing forward vigorously with the restoration of the damaged public buildings and industrial facilities, including schools, kindergartens, hospitals, factories and enterprises.

The design and construction of embankments in the affected areas should be done in a scientific way,

based on a comprehensive and detailed survey of the local physiographical conditions and shores. It is particularly important in designing the embankments to make an accurate estimate of the conditions at the time of the highest water level and, wherever necessary, to install flood-prevention structures.

As things stand at present, our regions are unilaterally vulnerable to rising levels of water in the Amnok River. On this occasion, we should decisively remove this chronic vulnerability, and thus eliminate, once and for all, the risk of floods wreaking havoc on Uiju County and the city of Sinuiju on the lower reaches of the river.

The regional Party organizations and government organs should adopt prompt measures for restoring the major infrastructure in the affected areas, such as roads, railways, communications and power grids.

Ensuring the free flow of traffic is a pressing task, since it is a prerequisite for transporting manpower, equipment and materials to the recovery sites and for the free economic activities of residents. So, the roads and railways must be opened as a matter of urgency in cooperation with the People's Army units that have been seconded to the rehabilitation project.

Efforts should also be focused on restoring

communications and the power grids to meet the needs of the local residents and the rehabilitation project for communication and electricity at the earliest possible date.

The regional Party organizations and government organs should work in a responsible manner to repair the damage to the agricultural sector.

Many hectares of crop fields were inundated. The regional Party organizations and government organs should not give up or feel disheartened, but redouble their efforts to prevent the damage spreading.

They should learn the lesson that the key aspect of the damage was that most of the crop fields were submerged. They should identify the weak spots in the dams, river embankments and waterways, and take thorough and immediate steps for repairing and reinforcing them, while adopting scientific and technological measures for improving the growth of the crops in the affected fields.

Based on a detailed analysis, the capacity of the drainage pumping stations should be doubled in order to keep the farmland from being damaged by any possible future floods, and a solid scientific and technical guarantee should be provided for them to operate at full capacity on a regular basis.

The regional Party organizations and government organs should focus on political work aimed at instilling confidence in the junior officials at farms and the other farmers and mobilizing them, and should give effective and responsible guidance over the work to repair the crop damage.

They should also give strong impetus to restoring the arable land that has been inundated or washed away.

Comrades,

We are currently facing a crucial challenge—preventing disasters. It is no less important and much more serious and urgent than the huge rehabilitation project.

Recently, the extent of the damage caused by weather disasters has been increasing worldwide year by year. The fact is no part of our country is absolutely safe and not susceptible to flooding and typhoons.

However, some officials are neglecting disaster prevention work and instead arguing about their regional characteristics or simply browsing through meteorological records. This is highly dangerous, unpardonable behaviour which is tantamount to gambling with people's safety.

Regional Party organizations and government organs should stake their future development on preventing the recurrence of damage by weather disasters, remaining on the alert and redoubling their efforts to preclude any more disastrous consequences.

For the present, they should set up a prompt, well-knit weather forecasting system and establish discipline, order and a system whereby all the sectors and units in their respective regions respond effectively to any weather disaster. In this way, if heavy rains and typhoons are expected, they can protect themselves.

Damage caused by the recent flooding highlighted how important it is in preventing disasters to ensure close contact and cooperation among various sectors and regions.

In case of an emergency, regions should maintain close contact, inform one another promptly of what elements are at risk, and actively regulate and adjust their responses. In particular, when heavy rain or flooding is imminent, all the units responsible for maintaining power stations and reservoir dams should obey to the letter the directives from the central organ that is in charge of the unified system for water control.

It is important for the state, by setting up a new water control system and creating a specialized institution, to establish an integrated system for enforcing, adjusting and implementing a uniform water control policy. This will tackle various tasks facing the regions, ranging from supplying drinking water to responding to flooding, drought and other disasters.

The recent flood damage has taught us that the most pressing task facing us is to ensure that the organs in charge of maintaining the dams enhance their role and that they establish integrated coordination and put it on a scientific footing quickly.

However, the existing disaster prevention organs are lame-duck entities that collect statistics rather than fulfill their assignments.

This offers a glimpse of how irresponsible our officials' work style is. Such disaster prevention organs, however many they may be, if they stick to their stereotypical way of thinking and formalistic work methods, will bring no benefit to the state.

It would be a good idea to study the issues of setting a flood warning period during the rainy season, ensuring unified and coordinated management of the sectoral and regional units in charge of water control,

and putting a flood response system in place.

Along with this, an integrated and more scientific flood forecast system should be established.

As I have stressed before, any laxity demonstrated by failing to consider the worst possible outcome in construction is bound to invite disaster.

We should build new, excellent homes in locations that are safe from disaster and adopt perfect measures for disaster prevention, so that they will last for the next 50 to 100 years.

To this end, appropriate construction sites should be identified, with a safety assessment as the major criterion. Also, a proper plan for the distribution and layout of houses should be drawn up to provide every convenience for the residents and satisfy their demands. And the durability of the houses should be ensured by increasing the quantity of building materials used for each one and encouraging the builders to enhance their sense of responsibility.

No less important than guaranteeing high speed and good quality in the construction of houses is ensuring that they are modern, in line with our people's increased level of civilization.

Houses, in their design and construction, should have non-repetitive, diverse and unique styles that

meet modern tastes and preserve the characteristic features of the given region and village.

Here I want to make a point of emphasizing that there should be no misguided practice of demolishing existing houses and building new ones on the same site in a perfunctory manner, without any detailed calculation.

It is also important to give residents regular education on coping with disasters.

We should work effectively to heighten their consciousness in this regard. We should define, on the basis of a detailed survey and confirmation, sites where they can take shelter in the case of an emergency, and draw up guidelines for evacuating them. And we should give strong impetus to securing the essential means of conducting rescue for deployment in various emergency situations.

Every region should conduct a comprehensive review and investigation of its capability for preventing natural disasters, identify the weak points and adopt timely measures for shoring them up. Also, in anticipation of the worst-case scenario caused by torrential rain, flooding, typhoons and tidal waves, it should identify and eradicate the danger spots, while paying due attention to ensuring

effective afforestation and water conservation.

Comrades,

The enormous undertaking for repairing the damage, which represents a huge step in alleviating the people's pain, providing them with improved welfare and transforming the regions, imposes a particularly high demand on the officials of local Party and government organs.

All officials should display the spirit of sincerely and devotedly assisting the people in the affected areas and sharing joy and sorrow with them.

Respect for and devoted service to the people is the inherent duty and obligation of our officials, and when the people suffer hardship, they should be especially faithful to their duty.

In particular, all Party officials should go deep among the masses in order to strengthen their ties with them and, in the course of doing so, become fused into a harmonious whole with them and inspire them in the rehabilitation project.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the need to prevent any deviation in rendering assistance to the people in the affected areas.

Every part of the country, as well as the Party Central Committee, the Cabinet, ministries and

national agencies, is now assisting the flood victims.

Assistance work must be conducted strictly on the principle of being voluntary, and never coercive.

In the past, when such natural disasters as flooding occurred, institutions, enterprises and working people's organizations were guilty of such practices as pointing out the variety and quantity of relief supplies they wanted to collect, while cadres, prompted by the desire for personal glory, acted subjectively in giving assignments for assistance work, gathering materials and sending them.

We must not get our people to send aid by imposing a burden on them on the pretext that they do not complain or that they accept that it is their obligation to help the residents in the affected areas.

Such assistance is worse than offering nothing at all.

We need to intensify our grasp and guidance over the whole society so as to ensure that assistance work for the people in the affected areas is done on the principle of being voluntary and strictly in accordance with each person's willingness. Then this work will become a process in which our society's great trait of sharing pain and sorrow and helping and leading one another forward is genuinely manifested,

not only in name, but also in reality.

At the same time, we need to take control of and register aid funds and materials in a unified way and distribute and supply them in a fair and rational manner so that they are used effectively for stabilizing the living conditions of the flood victims and for damage repair. At the same time, we should impose strict controls to prevent the appearance of such undesirable practices as fame-seeking, misappropriation and fraud.

Many countries and international organizations are currently expressing their willingness to provide us with humanitarian assistance.

I thank them.

However, what we stress primarily in all the domains and processes of state affairs is the approach of addressing problems by relying on the firm trust in the people and entirely on our own efforts.

In the current rehabilitation project, the Party Central Committee and the government are relying also on the patriotic enthusiasm and valour of our people and the potential of our state.

Just as we have always done, we will value our confidence in our own strength above all else, solve every problem by enlisting the strength and wisdom of

the people, and continue to steadily expand and increase our state power in such a way as to shape our future by our own strength and efforts.

As all our national efforts are concentrated on the rehabilitation project and all the planned work is being advanced smoothly under the unified and powerful guidance of our government, we will remain consistent to this principle.

Comrades,

Nationwide focus and all-people mobilization—these offer us a good chance of sure victory in recovering from the disaster.

In order to accomplish our current tasks—those historic tasks on which we have decided and which we have shouldered by ourselves for the sake of our beloved people and our future—the Party and the government are prepared to brave any challenges and live up to the people's trust with their faithful service and excellent results.

We will serve the people faithfully.

And we will always be with you.

Dear inhabitants of Uiju County and the city of Sinuiju,

Dear inhabitants of the affected areas in Jagang and Ryanggang provinces,

Please inform us frankly through the relevant Party organizations at any time, if you feel any inconvenience or difficulty.

Please wait for the day when you will lead a new life in your own, more splendid living place.

And I wish you good health free from illness.

Let all of us pool our strength and so overcome the present crisis and rise again.

Long live our great people!

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