**North Korea Child Malnutrition: 1 In 4 Kids Suffer From Chronic Food Insecurity And Hunger, UN Says**

AP | By By PETER JAMES SPIELMANN

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — More than a fourth of all North Korean children are stunted from chronic malnutrition, and two-thirds of the country's 24 million people don't know where their next meal is coming from, the United Nations said Friday.

The report illustrates a major domestic challenge for North Korea's new young leader, Kim Jong Un.

A team from the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, reporting from North Korea, found that 2.8 million North Koreans "are in need of regular food assistance amidst worrying levels of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity." It said 4 percent of North Korean children are acutely malnourished.

The report did not directly mention North Korea's recent threats against South Korea, its threat of a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the U.S. or Pyongyang's claim to have abolished the Korean War armistice as of Monday.

But the report said humanitarian aid should be neutral and impartial "and must not be contingent on political developments."

The OCHA team also found that much of North Korea's support structure is crumbling under the third generation of Kim family rule.

"Supplies of medicine and equipment are inadequate; water and heating systems need repair, and the infrastructure of schools and colleges is deteriorating rapidly," the report said.

With little arable land, harsh weather and chronic shortages of fuel and equipment, North Korea has struggled for decades to feed its 24 million people. Its new leader, who took over in December 2011, has made improving the economy a priority and has pledged to improve North Koreans' standards of living.

Last autumn, a U.N. team visited all nine agricultural provinces of the communist state during the main cereal harvest and estimated that North Korea would need to import 507,000 metric tons of cereals to meet its basic food needs in 2013.

That U.N. team's report recommended that North Korean farmers be allowed to sell or barter their surplus food at market, rather than turn their excess over to the state. Such incentives should encourage farmers to boost production, according to the joint report last year from the World Food Program and U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization.

But the survey also made clear that the problems that have long kept North Koreans undernourished remain: insufficient and inefficient tractors and chronic shortages of fuel, spare parts and tires necessary to run them.

Agriculture is North Korea's lifeblood, contributing a quarter of the nation's economy and engaging a third of the population. But many northern farms rely on ox and manual labor because there aren't enough tractors and equipment to go around. Foreign food aid and imports make up for the shortfalls.

North Korea also suffered a severe famine in the mid- and late-1990s

The country's food problems date to the division of the country in 1945 between the more industrialized north, with more coal and iron, and South Korea, which had most of the arable land and rice paddies. North Korea's isolation and restricted trade under the Kim dynasty has stunted its ability to develop normal import-export trade to meet its food needs.

1. According to this article how is North Korea answering the **3 economic questions**?
2. Are they effective at answering these questions? How do you know? (provide evidence from the article)
3. Identify the **economic system** that North Korea is operating under. Based on this article why do you think that this system has very few followers & supporters in the 21st century?
4. What are the **costs** associated with this system? **Benefits**?
5. Evaluate the **costs versus benefits**; is it worth it economically speaking?