

President of State Affairs Kim Jong Un clarifies in his speech stand of Party and government on repairing flood damage and consoles flood victims

Dear inhabitants from the flood-stricken area,
How do you do, everyone?

I think you must be experiencing much inconvenience and difficulty in this evacuation area after leaving your houses owing to the unexpected natural disaster.

Some days ago I saw your circumstances and had emergency measures taken by the Party Central Committee and the state on the flood-stricken spot, but I could hardly get to work at the thought about the flood victims.

Of course, I have received reports several times a day that all the victims are leading a more or less stabilized life, but I could not be relieved from worry for a moment.

I have come here again to acquaint myself with the situation in greater detail on the spot, reassign some tasks for the rehabilitation project and take additional measures of national importance, which would be helpful to you.

Several days have passed since you faced an abnormal living environment in temporary shelters after experiencing a great unexpected disaster, and I have felt ill at ease as I have failed to help you greatly in spite of the willingness to do something somehow.

Though the whole country has turned out to sincerely help you, for the present I cannot but feel anxious and impatient as I am unable to remove all the inconveniences you are experiencing in the damp tents and poorly-furnished public facilities.

Nevertheless, as I see all of you in good health, showing no sign of inconvenience, I feel much relieved and greatly encouraged.

Our Party and government should have given you strength and energy, but they are gaining strength from your appearance.

You have always trusted and relied on our Party and government, and in these days of harsh trials, too, you place such an absolute and unconditional trust on them. I feel very grateful for and proud of it.

And I realize more keenly what should I do more and how for these laudable people, who steadfastly follow our Party devoting their pure loyalty and a sense of obligation throughout their life.

What I would like to mention first here is that the Central Committee of our Party and the government of our Republic will always share with you your pains caused by the disaster.

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

Going closer to the people to share their feelings the harder the times are is the mode of existence and activities inherent to our Party.

The place where the leadership of our state should find itself at a time when the people suffered disaster like this is the disaster-stricken area and rehabilitation project site.

Extending once again profound consolation to you, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to outline the immediate measures our Party and government will take to promote the living of the flood victims and repair the damage.

All work of the Party and the state are now concentrated on the rehabilitation campaign here.

Not only here but also some areas in Jagang and Ryanggang provinces in the basin of the Amnok River suffered damage.

In order to finish the campaign in the shortest period possible on the highest level, the Party and the government have decided to make a readjustment of even some of the construction projects of national importance and commit colossal human and material resources to the campaign.

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

As a preliminary to the enforcement of effective measures for fully restoring the flood victims' living conditions as soon as possible and removing the aftermath of the natural calamity, a

comprehensive and detailed investigation about the damage is ongoing, and the relevant sector is striving hard to draw up a scientific plan for the restoration project.

A more than 130 000-strong construction workforce comprising service personnel of the People's Army and young people is being committed for the restoration work here in North Phyongan Province alone.

At the national level, the Central Committee on Measures for Repairing the Damage was organized and has commenced its work, to be followed by provincial on-site headquarters for the restoration work; and the transportation of necessary materials has already been switched over to an emergency system.

Our objective in displaying such daring spirit, organizing work at lightning speed and seeking its unflinching implementation is to transform your dear island villages and the northwestern part of the country beyond recognition.

Comrades,

The whole country is all out for the restoration work, but given the extent of damage, it will take at least two or three months to stabilize the flood victims' living by building new houses and repairing the existing ones.

What the Party and the government should give top priority to in this period is to take good care of their living as much as possible.

Recently, I am holding consultations every day with leading officials of the relevant institutions over the necessary measures to be adopted to this end.

It is indispensable to set up a well-regulated system for the distribution of newspapers and other publications, supply a TV set to each family and install one in every public place, so that the afflicted residents can keep abreast of the Party's intentions, and to direct close attention to ensuring them a good meal.

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

Currently, some leading officials within our government, for their lack of experience and qualifications, are making a point of the restoration work in total disregard of educating and caring for students and other children.

Needless to say, children will find it quite inconvenient to live in tents or others' houses until the completion of the restoration work, and, in particular, this will have a serious impact on their education.

Also, measures for medical care are not going beyond the supply of medicines, and there is not yet a specific and realistic plan for medical services.

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

So, we are going to put in place an emergency system, whereby during the restoration work the students and all other children of the afflicted families in North Phyongan, Jagang and Ryanggang provinces shall stay in Pyongyang and be provided with a safe and comfortable environment for care and education, entirely at state expense.

Nursing, edification and education of students and other children are the most important of all state affairs never to be abandoned even if the sky may fall in.

So, the state is going to take full responsibility for this work during the rehabilitation campaign period.

And state-backed care benefits will be offered in Pyongyang to the elderly and sick persons, honoured disabled ex-soldiers and nursing mothers before new houses are built in the flood-stricken areas.

According to a rough estimate, among the families of flood victims preschoolers number 2 198, students 4 384, the elderly 4 524, the sick and the honoured disabled ex-soldiers 265, and nursing mothers 4 096.

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

With a view to giving such a state emergency assistance, the Party Central Committee will organize a command team and ensure that services for them are offered at the April 25 Hostel and the military parade training base in Pyongyang.

It will provide temporary learning spaces for students and other children and organize interim mobile educational teams, comprising teachers from primary and middle schools and preschool educational institutions in Pyongyang. They will give education without letup to the students and other children after their summer vacation is over.

It will also ensure that staple and subsidiary foods, daily necessities and medicines are fully supplied, and mobile service and medical teams are organized with competent members from the important service units and hospitals in Pyongyang so as to direct all efforts to ensuring the living conditions of flood victims according to the state's special measures.

There might be some mothers who are reluctant to be separated from their little children for several months, and there might be some persons who are unwilling to leave for some reasons, I think.

As there may be their personal reasons, I will leave it to their intentions and decisions.

However, this was organized to do even one more thing helpful to the flood victims suffering in the unfamiliar areas and minimize their inconveniences, you may rest assured of me, I think.

As it is the top priority work of the state, the Party and the government will take full responsibility for caring with utmost sincerity the health and living of the flood victims coming to Pyongyang as their parents and children would do, and make special and devoted efforts lest all of them feel an iota of gloom.

It is another problem facing the families evacuated from the areas, which are undergoing rehabilitation, that they have no proper places to keep their family property even if they manage to get them out of water.

The flood victims do not show any signs of it, but they might feel great anxiety.

So for the convenience of the evacuated families during the construction of new houses, we should offer them places where they can keep their household belongings safely.

This will also be good for the families to be enjoying protection and care in Pyongyang.

Comrades,

It is necessary for us to impress on our mind once again that the current rehabilitation project is not simply an undertaking for our own but also a serious struggle against the enemy.

At present, the enemy, misusing the occasion when we have suffered damage, is continuing to make 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 networks of education and the people of these facts and thus make them have a correct understanding of the ROK scum bordering on us.

The rubbish ROK's media are desperately slandering all the socialist benefits and measures taken by our Party and government for the flood victims and also the communist traits displayed throughout the society, abusing them as a means of achieving some sort of internal unity and a type of demonstration. They are also fabricating such false information, in their frantic manoeuvres to slander our government and system, that the missing persons in the afflicted areas exceed 1 000 in number and that its intelligence authorities found out that several helicopters had fallen on rescue mission.

Worse still, they are spreading a baseless rumour that the V-day celebrations took place in Pyongyang on the 27th of last month when loss of life occurred in the flood-hit areas.

Because the rumour is in wide circulation in the ROK society that its government is always late in coping with all sorts of accidents that happened there and such is an everyday occurrence in the country, they seem to weave absurd sophistry that slanders and slights us in an attempt to coax their citizens and stir up world public sentiments.

When I visited the helicopter unit that rescued you, I gave full account of the rescue operation, including the crash-landing by one helicopter during the operation, and expressed my gratitude that there had been no casualties in the turmoil.

The enemy even went so far as to say that I reacted personally to the report fabricated by their media because there were heavy casualties and I intended to cover it up.

What is their dogged insistence on making you, safe and sound like this, missing or dead? It is an open and shut case.

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

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

There is no need for us to make separate materials for education. It is because these clear facts are actual and educational materials good enough to clearly bring home to the people how filthy the enemy clan is, what ancient and old-fashioned way they resort to for fabrication and political smear campaign to tarnish the image of our state, what their ulterior motives are and why we call the enemy the enemy and scum.

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

What we must clearly realize is that the enemy is what we see them now.

Referring to these actual facts, the whole country should have a correct understanding of the enemy and cultivate a correct feeling against them.

Our enemy is an unchangeable enemy.

We should make the current opportunity, which helps us to have a correct understanding of what our enemy is, an opportunity of having a correct stand towards the enemy.

Today, present here are leading officials of Party organizations and government organs of North Phyongan Province, as well as officials of Uiju County.

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

The masters of relevant areas should play their proper role in the effort to stabilize the living of the flood victims at the earliest possible date.

As you have witnessed, many flood victims in different areas including North Phyongan and Jagang provinces are living outdoors in the violent 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 afflicted areas are living optimistically, placing their trust in our Party.

Even so, 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 food, non-staple foodstuffs and fuel indispensable for their living are supplied regularly without running short of them, and take strong measures to supply them with daily necessities.

Provinces, cities and counties should promote the flood victims' living by providing them in a responsible manner with the food and other materials in need with those in reserve and promptly supplying them with relief materials of the state.

They should supply the flood victims with all daily necessities, ranging from bedding, sanitation goods to such small articles as scissors, needles and threads.

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

Water is one of the basic essentials for people's living, and drinking water is badly needed in the flood-hit areas where there are scarce sources of it owing to pollution caused by flood damage.

Party organizations and power organs in the relevant areas should do away with a temporary attitude, and take effective steps for supplying enough drinking water to places where the flood victims live.

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

Wherever the flood victims have been evacuated, it is necessary, by taking their number into account, to properly install bathrooms, public toilets, garbage dumps and drain pipes in conformity with hygienic standards and effectively maintain them, so as to eliminate the sources of outbreak of epidemic diseases.

Regional Party organizations and power organs should commit all medical resources available in the areas to taking good care of the victims' health in a responsible manner, supply them with Koryo and other medicines to the utmost, and conduct an epidemic prevention campaign in an intensive way.

They should be proactive in organizing and conducting the rehabilitation project to restore the production and living order in the flood-hit areas to the normal level.

They should strictly conduct a safety test of the afflicted dwelling houses and public buildings, and on the basis of this, promptly launch the rehabilitation project.

A key factor in this regard is to check such details as whether the buildings, which were submerged, have not undergone structural changes and whether their foundations are firm enough, and thoroughgoing measures should be adopted for preventing second damage due to the collapse of those buildings.

Another important factor is to distinguish what should be newly built from what are in need of repair, introduce a scientific order of priority and plans for the restoration work, and give priority to the construction and repair of houses so that the flood victims can move into them as soon as possible.

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

The designing and construction of dams in the afflicted areas should be done in a scientific way, based on a comprehensive and detailed survey of the local physiographical conditions and embankments. In particular, it is important in designing the dams to make an accurate estimate of the conditions at the time of the highest level of water, and, wherever necessary, to install flood-blocking structures.

As things stand at the moment, our regions are unilaterally vulnerable to the rising level of water flowing into the Amnok River. This time we should decisively remove this chronic vulnerability, thus totally eliminating the source of risk of flood wreaking havoc on Uiju County and the city of Sinuiju on the lower reaches of the river.

Regional Party organizations and power organs should adopt prompt measures for restoring the major elements of infrastructure in the afflicted areas, such as roads, railways, communications and power grids.

Ensuring free traffic flow is a pressing task, since it is a prerequisite for the transport of manpower, equipment and materials to the rehabilitation sites and for the residents' free economic activities. So, it is urgent to open the roads and railways 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.

Regional Party organizations and power organs should work in a responsible manner to recover damage that has been done to the agricultural sector.

This time not a few hectares of crop fields were inundated; they should not give up or feel disheartened, but make redoubled efforts to prevent the spread of damage.

They should learn a lesson from the fact that the key aspect of damage is the most of the crop fields being submerged. They should identify the weak spots in the dams, river embankments and waterways, and take thoroughgoing steps for repairing and reinforcing them immediately, while adopting scientific and technological measures for improving the growth of crops in the afflicted fields.

Based on a detailed analysis of the pumping stations for drainage, they should double their capacity to keep farmland from being damaged by any possible flood, and provide a firm scientific and technical guarantee for their regular operation at full capacity.

They should focus on the political work aimed at instilling confidence in the junior officials of the farms and other farmers and mobilizing them, giving effective and responsible guidance over the work of repairing the damage done to the crops.

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

Comrades,

We are currently facing a crucial task of disaster prevention, which is no less important and which is much more serious and urgent, than the huge rehabilitation project.

Recently, the extent of damage caused by disastrous weather conditions is increasing worldwide year after year, and in actual fact, no part of our country is absolutely safe, i.e., insusceptible to flooding and typhoon.

This being the case, some officials neglect the disaster prevention work, arguing on their regional characteristics or browsing through meteorological observation records. Such is a very dangerous and unpardonable act which is tantamount to gambling with people's safety.

Regional Party organizations and power organs should stake their future development on the prevention of recurrence of damage by disastrous weather conditions, putting themselves on tenterhooks and making redoubled efforts to preclude any more disastrous consequences.

For the present, they should set up a prompt and well-knit weather forecasting system and establish the discipline, order and system whereby all the sectors and units in their respective regions respond effectively to any disastrous weather conditions. In this way, they can keep themselves from being affected by the expected heavy rain and typhoon.

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

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

It is important for the state to renew its water control system and create a specialized institution in order to establish an integrated water control system for enforcing, adjusting and implementing a uniform water control policy, which will tackle various tasks facing regions, ranging from the supply of drinking water to responses to flooding, drought and other disasters.

The lesson taught by the recent flood damage has proved that our pressing task is to make the organs in charge of maintaining the dams enhance their role, and to ensure their integrated coordination and put it on a scientific footing quickly.

However, the existing disaster prevention organs are lame-duck entities substituting their assignment for collecting statistics.

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

It is advisable to study the issues of setting a flood warning period in 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 flood forecast system should be established in a more scientific way.

As I have already stressed, any lax approach of failing to consider the worst conditions in construction will inevitably invite a terrible disaster.

We should build new, excellent houses where geographical safety against disaster is assured and perfect measures have been adopted for disaster prevention, so that they will last for the coming 50 to 100 years.

To this end, appropriate sites of construction should be fixed with their safety assessment as a major criterion; 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 houses

should be ensured by increasing the amount of building materials needed for each house and encouraging the builders to enhance their sense of responsibility.

What is no less important than to ensure high speed and good quality in the construction of houses is to sustain their modernity commensurate with the increased level of civilization of our people.

The designing and construction of houses should be done in a non-repetitive, diversified and unique style so they can meet the modern tastes and preserve the characteristic features of the given regions and villages.

I want to specially emphasize that there should be no wrong practice of demolishing the existing houses and building new ones on their very sites in a perfunctory manner without an accurate calculation.

It is also important to give the residents regular education on how to cope with disasters.

We should work effectively to heighten their consciousness of coping with disasters; define, on the basis of a detailed survey and confirmation, the spots where the residents are to take shelter in case of disaster, and work out guidelines for their evacuation; and give a strong impetus to securing essential means of rescue operation to be used in various emergency circumstances.

All the regions should conduct a comprehensive review and investigation of their capabilities to prevent natural calamities, discover the weak points and adopt timely measures for reinforcing them. Also, in anticipation of the worst situation caused by torrential rain, flooding, typhoon and tidal waves, they should identify, eradicate and take precautions against dangerous spots, while paying due attention to ensuring effective afforestation and water conservation.

Comrades,

The enormous undertakings for the repairing of the damage, which constitutes a big step in the course of alleviating the people's pain, providing them with greater welfare and transforming the regions, make a particularly high demand on the officials of the field Party and government organs.

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

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

In particular, all the Party officials should go deep among the masses to strengthen ties with them and, in the course of this, get fused into a harmonious whole with them to inspire them to the rehabilitation campaign.

Last, I would like to emphasize the need to prevent any deviation in the assistance to the people in the afflicted areas.

At present, all parts of the country, as well as the Party Central Committee, the Cabinet, ministries and national agencies, are rendering assistance to the flood victims.

Assistance work must be conducted strictly on the principle of voluntariness, never in an organized or forced way.

In the past, when such natural disasters as flooding occurred, institutions, enterprises and working people's organizations revealed such practices as pointing out the variety and quantity of relief supplies to collect them, while cadres, prompted by the desire for personal fame, subjectively gave assignments for assistance work to gather materials and send them.

We must not get our people to send aid even by imposing burdens on them on the pretext that they do not make any complaints, regarding it as their natural duty to help the residents in the afflicted areas.

Such assistance is worse than not offering at all.

It is needed to intensify the grasp and guidance over the whole society in order to make sure that the assistance work for the people in the afflicted areas is done on the principle of voluntariness, strictly in accordance with the will of each person, so that this work becomes a process in which our society's great traits of sharing pain and sorrow and helping and leading one another forward are truthfully manifested in name and reality.

At the same time, it is necessary to grasp and register aid funds and materials in a unified way and distribute and supply them in a fair and rational way, so that they can be used effectively for the

stabilization of the living of the flood victims and the damage recovery, while imposing strict control lest there should appear such undesirable practices as fame seeking, misappropriation and fraud.

At present, many countries and international organizations are expressing their willingness to provide us with humanitarian assistance.

I extend thanks to them.

But what we put forward first in all domains and processes of the state affairs is the way of addressing problems by relying on the firm trust in the people and entirely on our own efforts.

What the Party Central Committee and the government relies on in the current rehabilitation campaign is also the patriotic enthusiasm and valour of our people and the potentials of our state from A to Z.

As we have always done, we will value our confidence in our own strength more than anything else, solve all problems by enlisting the strength and wisdom of the people, and continue to steadily expand and increase our state's strength in that way to shape our future with our own strength and efforts in the future, too.

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

Comrades,

Nationwide concentration and all-people mobilization—these have given us a good chance of sure victory in the repairing of the disaster.

In order to accomplish the tasks of the times, the historic tasks on which we decided and which we have shouldered by ourselves for our beloved people and our future, the Party and the government will readily 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 afflicted areas in Jagang and Ryanggang provinces,

Please inform us open-heartedly through the relevant Party organizations at any time if you feel any inconveniences or difficulties.

Please wait for the day when you will lead a new life in your living place which will be changed more splendidly.

And I wish you good health free from illnesses.

Let all of us pool our strength to successfully overcome the present crisis and get up.

Long live our great people!