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BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific - Political
Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring

January 31, 2005, Monday

LENGTH: 230 words

HEADLINE: UN body looking to help North Korea with infrastructure development

SOURCE: Yonhap news agency, Seoul, in English 0949 gmt 31 Jan 05

BODY:

Text of report in English by South Korean news agency Yonhap

Seoul, 31 January: The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is putting the finishing touches on a plan to help with North Korea's dilapidated infrastructure, the executive secretary of the organization said Monday 31 January .

Kim Hak-su, who has been re-elected to the executive post for another two-year term, said the support blueprint covers energy, transportation, water use, environmental protection and statistics management.

The South Korean official said at a Radio Free Asia broadcast that ESCAP officials had visited the country in June 2004 to look over present conditions.

The United Nations' projects will touch on such areas as disposing of solid waste, dealing with yellow dust storms from China, improving waters that flow through Pyongyang and training engineers to handle certain electricity cables.

Other issues include improving the efficiency of coal-burning electric power plants and the feasibility of building a so-called Asia Highway linking Japan, the two Koreas, China, Southeast Asia, India, Iran and Turkey.

Kim also told the US government-supported radio station that the nuclear stand-off was proving an obstacle to the flow of financial aid, but that providing the communist state with technological assistance was possible.

LOAD-DATE: January 31, 2005