



AFRICA/UGANDA - Famine and drought afflicting thousands of Ugandans

Agago (Agenzia Fides) – Thousands of people who live in 36 of the 112 districts of Uganda are in grave danger of famine due to the drought linked to the La Niña weather phenomenon. Health workers issued an epidemic warning for sicknesses such as diarrhoea and dysentery, due to poor hygiene measures. “The situation requires careful attention. Many families are without food,” revealed the Minister for Disaster Prevention, Musa Ecweru, in a statement released by IRIN, from the United Nations. The Ministry fears imminent severe water and food shortages in some areas of the Country. According to weather forecasts, Uganda will face a long period of drought, despite rain expected for the month of March. However, it will not be enough for the agriculture. In some of the 36 affected districts, the wells are drying up and residents are forced to travel long distances in search of water. Strong winds are destroying the structures and movement is hampered by temperatures ranging from 35 to 38 degrees Celsius during the day. In the north, former displaced people who have now resettled in villages in the districts of Acholi are victims of frequent fires and lowered water levels of the rivers. The drought has also affected the production of electricity. The rivers Aswa, Ayugi, Unyama and Pager, in Kitgum and Amuru districts, are drying up. The shepherds who live in the districts of Nakasongola and Bullisa, in the Bunyoro region, are concerned about the livestock that has nowhere to graze. The torrential rains of 2010 have seriously affected some parts of the country, exacerbating the precariousness of food supplies. (AP) (11/3/2011 Agenzia Fides)