



## **AFRICA/NIGER-New project for the construction of a social-medical center**

Niamey (Agenzia Fides) - The health situation in the region of Dosso, south-west of Niger, is anything but easy: to the very high poverty rate (86% of the population is considered "poor", and between 51% "extremely poor"), you add the spread of polygamy and early marriage, with consequences on the health of the population, especially women and children. In particular, the tradition of giving unassisted birth at home, reinforced by the remoteness of the hospitals, poor quality of services and lack of knowledge about the benefits of supervised deliveries, generate the most disastrous results: 680 to 100 000 women die during childbirth or from complications related to pregnancy and also the rate of infant mortality (especially of children, up to 4 years), is affected negatively by this situation. In an attempt to address the situation of particular urgency and improve health coverage in the Region, the Movement for the Struggle Against World Hunger and the Diocese of Lodi (Italy) have initiated the project of building a social-medical center for the welfare of women and children, including a hospital for basic treatment, with maternity wards, pediatrics and a nutrition center, supported by a training program for midwives, birth attendants at home, one for each village, pediatricians and nutritionists, for monthly visits to the villages. The main pillars of this enterprise, will be to sensitize and train mothers to turn to safe birth delivery in hospitals or otherwise assisted by qualified personnel, but will also involve pediatricians, midwives, birth attendants and nutritionists. The centerpieces of the project are the residents of the suburb, east of Dosso and 56 villages within a radius of 30 km from the dispensary, in addition to the approximately 40 000 inhabitants of 56 villages assisted by midwives and paediatricians, and 50 000 inhabitants on the outskirts of Dosso, for a total of about 90 000 inhabitants, of whom 52% are women. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 12/05/2011)