



AFRICA/UGANDA - The serious economic situation puts at risk the closure of seminaries

Kampala (Agenzia Fides) - The rampant inflation and other economic problems which are seriously affecting Uganda, threaten the closure of seminaries despite the increasing number of priestly vocations in the country. Mr. Cosmas Alule, rector of the Alokolum Major Seminary, said that last year, rising fuel prices also pushed up the price of food. Since August 2010, the inflation rate has risen from 1.7% to about 19%. Addressing the Pontifical Right Society "Aid to the Church that Suffers", Msgr. Alule added that it is very difficult to bear the costs of basic food products, despite the country cultivates rice, beans, corn and vegetables, in order to reduce costs. The rector stressed that the causes of the economic crisis are not only due to drought, but also the expensive campaign carried out last February. "The government spent a lot of money in an irresponsible way for political reasons, instead of thinking about the people's welfare".

The Alokolum Seminar is in an area that experienced 30 years of civil war between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army. Although the building occupies a very small space, it was not possible to continue the renovations because of soaring prices of construction materials. However, for this new academic year, there are 209 students, 26 more than last year, so the enlargement has become necessary. Last year, in five seminaries in the country, over 1000 young priests were trained for priesthood. This unfortunate economic situation is also a burden on other seminaries in Uganda, where out of 33 million inhabitants, 45% are Catholics. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 01/09/2011)