



## **AMERICA/MEXICO - Maternal deaths: the fatal destiny of peasants and indigenous people**

Mexico City (Agenzia Fides) - The celebrations for the International Day of Rural Women has just concluded, official figures show that in the Mexican states where most of the indigenous people or peasants live, and where there are alarming indicators of maternal deaths. In fact, while the national average of this phenomenon is 53.3 deaths per 100 000 live births, in the southwestern state of Guerrero, with a high index of rural and indigenous population, the indicator reaches 103.2 for maternal deaths and the same number for births. Although Oaxaca and Chiapas are experiencing a similar situation with respectively 82.7 and 80.6 deaths.

What is making the situation worse is the lack of education of many women, 3 in 10 have no education. 48% of those who speak an indigenous language (from 5 to 29 years) do not attend school. According to the Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica (Inadid) 2009, 5.7% of girls aged 5 and above does not speak any indigenous language. 25% from 15 to 29 years of age, 41.2% from 30 to 59 years of age. More than 60% are in the reproductive age.

In addition, according to the census of 2010, the rural population in the country accounts for 22% of the total population. In Mexico there are 95 men per 100 women. To reduce the maternal mortality rate assisted births by skilled medical personnel should be increased. Until 2008, the national average was 87%, but in Chiapas it reached just 36.1%, 64.4% in Oaxaca and 68.8% in Guerrero. In 2009, 14% of women who died because of pregnancy was less than 19 years old. This year the average of antenatal consultations was 4.7 per pregnant woman, when it should be at least 7. The most important challenge to meet this emergency medical care is to address health care with adequate technology and to have health operators closer to the indigenous culture. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 27/10/2011)