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AFRICA/ZIMBABWE - More than a million people need food aid

Harare (Agenzia Fides) - Due to very scarse harvest, more than a million people in the Midlands Provinces are forced to survive eating fruit as a main meal in the evening, and are not able to pay school fees for their children. In a study conducted by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC), a group of agencies dealing with food safety, showed that 12% of the rural population will not be able to meet the minimum requirement of cereals for the season 2011/12. Several areas in Zimbabwe have had poor crop due to very little rain, the population had less income to purchase means of agricultural production, and there was also a precarious planning. All these factors have led the government to import grain and for the hungry to depend on donations. The report indicates that the southern and western areas of the arid country are those most severely affected, such as the provinces of Masvingo and Matabeleland, where for most rural families, agriculture is the only source of livelihood. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the situation is getting worse because of economic recession, and families have already started to ration food. The WFP is promoting a program for the distribution of food, food vouchers for families with low incomes and for the most vulnerable children and orphans. It is expected that 200 000 people will receive aid in 3 districts. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 01/12/2011)

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