



## **ASIA/YEMEN - Consequences of early marriage are abuse on girls and young women, limits access to education and affects their health**

Sana'a (Agenzia Fides) - The widespread practice of child marriage in countries such as Yemen, threatens access to education for girls in Yemen, affects their health and places them in a position of second class. This is what emerges in the recent report by Human Rights Watch "How Come You Allow Little Girls to Get Married?: Child Marriage in Yemen," which documents the permanent damage to the girls forced into young marriage by their families. The political crisis that hit Yemen has yet to overlook serious problems like this or equality between men and women. According to data from the government and the United Nations, about 14% of the girls in the country marry before the age of 15 and 52% before 18. In some rural areas, girls are already married at 8 years of age and to much older men. From another study carried out in Yemen there are many parents in rural areas who interrupt their daughters studies at the age of 9 in order to get help at home, look after younger siblings and to marry them. Furthermore, often these small "women" suffer verbal and physical violence in a household. The Government should implement legislative measures to fix the minimum age for marriage at 18 and promote greater awareness about the damage caused by early marriage. Many other countries of the Middle East and North Africa where, as in Yemen, the Sharia is a source of law, have set the minimum age for marriage at 18, both for boys and girls, according to the norms and international treaties. Even Yemen, adheres to a series of treaties and international conventions that prohibit child marriage and explicitly require its members to take appropriate measures to eliminate this practice, but so far there are still many episodes which are recorded. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 09/12/2011)