



ASIA/YEMEN - Appeal to help 750 000 malnourished Yemeni children

Sana (Agenzia Fides) - Approximately 750 thousand Yemeni children under five years of age suffer from malnutrition. This is what is learned from a recent press release, sent to Fides, which was released in Sana by the Regional Director of UNICEF for the Middle East and North Africa, which has launched an appeal to the international community for help so the country can cope with this serious problem. The index of malnutrition in Yemen was already very high before the political crisis that led to the protests which lasted a year. However, the situation has deteriorated: after 11 months of conflict, 43% of the total 3.7 million children under 5 years of age is underweight. The people who suffer most are those who have fewer economic resources because of rising food prices and the worsening of basic health services. Already in the past months the UN had launched the alarm about the precarious situation of the country which was on the verge of a humanitarian disaster and that was in danger of turning into another Somalia. In addition to the political crisis, the situation has worsened due to the poor management of agricultural production in the country, which obliges to import 90% of the food. About half of Yemen's 24 million inhabitants live in poverty and food insecurity. This is the second country in the world after Afghanistan, where some of the highest levels of acute child malnutrition is registered. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 26/01/2012)