



## **AMERICA/HAITI - More than 500 thousand children without school education: emergency**

Port au Prince (Agenzia Fides) - More than 500 thousand children in Haiti are without a school education, the overall illiteracy rate is over 50% and the right to education is denied to thousands of families: is the alarm raised by the conference "Right to Education in Haiti: challenges and prospects", held in past days in the Haitian capital, Port au Prince. The event brought together representatives of civil society organizations and the Haitian educators, as well as an international delegation of "Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education" (Clade), with experts from eight foreign countries. As reported to Fides, the participants gave rise to a debate and undertook field visits to learn the status of education in the country, ensuring the real "educational emergency" that exists in Haiti, more than two years after the earthquake of 2010.

Another problem that was reported is the level of privatization of education. Currently, 92% of schools are private, considered the highest in the world. This reality constitutes an impediment for thousands of children, since the school fee for each student, about \$ 70 a year, is a figure impossible to sustain for most Haitian families. The participants also verified the poor state of educational facilities in the country, characterized by overcrowding, with a case of 225 students in one class, found in a rural school. Moreover, the lessons are taught in French, although the country's native language is Creole. The conference's final document, sent to Fides, asks the State to "guarantee the right to education throughout the country," promoting public education, access and quality, especially at the elementary school level, without any discrimination. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 09/06/2012)