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AFRICA/SENEGAL - Emergency food crisis: 800 000 people are undernourished, millions of children at risk

Dakar (Agenzia Fides) - In addition to Niger, Mauritania and Mali, even Senegal, with its 12.5 million inhabitants, at least 800 000 people are seriously affected by the food crisis. Throughout the country, malnutrition caused by food shortage and drought, also involve 14.1% of children in the northeastern region of Matam. According to the humanitarian organization Action Against Hunger (ACH), in the Sahel region (West Africa and south of the Sahara Desert), unless serious measures are taken immediately, one million cases of severe malnutrition and nearly three million moderate acute malnutrition among children under 5 years of age is expected. Local residents are not able to buy food in the markets because of high prices and have had to reduce their food intake to a minimum. Those who suffer the most are young children because they do not eat meat or fruit, also because of the death of animals, milk is scarce. Many of the children of Matam are brought to the hospital in Ourossogui, where professionals of the ACH collaborate with health care personnel to prevent these young victims to die. Initially, 2,600 children were assisted from Matam, which counts 400 000 inhabitants. Many children live in villages with difficult access where drought is destroying agriculture and cattle. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 20/6/2012)

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