



AMERICA/HAITI - One child out of 10 is compelled to forced work: they are the restavek, invisible and vulnerable victims

Port au Prince - With 225,000 working children, mainly girls between 5 and 17 years of age, child labor, a form of modern slavery, is unfortunately a very common practice in Haiti and is continually increasing since the earthquake hit the island, recording more than 200 000 deaths. According to the latest data reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in Haiti 1 out of 10 children are victims of the worst system of forced labor. At the origin of the phenomenon we find parents who send their children to live in the city with relatives, who are better off financially, they hoped they could go to school and live better. Unfortunately, however, these children have become modern-day slaves, averaging between ten and fourteen hours of work a day in which they are engaged as domestic servants, and in some cases, even sexually exploited. In Creole language these children are called restavek, and with them, the number of "go-betweens" used for recruitment has increased. The system of the restavek is undoubtedly the most serious form of forced child labor in Haiti and continues to deteriorate. The victims are invisible and vulnerable to all forms of exploitation. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 31/08/2012)