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AFRICA - Epidemics, famine and severe flooding are lashing the continent

Kampala (Agenzia Fides) - Torrential rains and floods are hitting in recent weeks several countries of Central and Western Africa and Sahel, from Senegal to Mauritania, from Benin to Uganda until Chad where the United Nations have certified 13 deaths and almost half a million people affected, 73,412 houses destroyed, and about 255.720 hectares of farmland flooded. Damaged areas include five districts of the capital of Chad, N'Djamena, as well as regions of Dar Sila, Salamat, Moyen-Chari, Tandjilé, Eastern Mayo-Kebbi and Western Mayo-Kebbi, where 81,000 hectares of crops have gone flooded. Compounding the situation of crops, locusts contribute in parts of the northeast and east of Chad that destroying crops, fuel the severe food crisis already affecting 3.6 million people. To the victims and displaced persons the extensive damage to agriculture and pastoralism must be added, the little, if not only, livelihood in this part of the world.
In northern Uganda about 15 000 people have been forced to flee their homes destroyed along with crops, roads and bridges. The districts most affected are those of Acholi, Agago, Kitgum, Lamwo and Pader. In Agago 3,492 families have been affected, about 13 000 hectares of crops have been flooded and about 2,000 latrines destroyed. Some areas of the country have been completely swept away and the spread of epidemics and famine is feared. In Kenya the situation is no better. Homes and schools continue to be submerged in the Rift Valley province, latrines have overflowed contaminating water sources. The poor condition of roads hinder the distribution of medicines, blankets, tents, mosquito nets. In some clinics medical equipment and medicines have been destroyed. Over the past two months, the floods have left more than 200 victims and hundreds of thousands homeless in Nigeria and Niger. In Nigeria alone, according to the local Red Cross, since July there have been 137 deaths and more than 36,000 displaced even though, according to sources of the federal state of Adamawa, in this region alone there are at least 120,000 homeless. The government of Niger has instead said that since July floods have killed 68 people and caused more than half a million homeless. In some centers there is emergency cholera with nearly 4,000 reported cases and over 80 deaths. In Senegal the Archdiocese of Dakar has organized a solidarity concert to raise funds destined to the affected population. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 14/09/2012)

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