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AFRICA/NIGERIA - 120 000 homeless, houses, hospitals, schools, churches and buildings destroyed or damaged by the worst flooding in 40 years

Lagos (Agenzia Fides) - There are a million and 300,000 Nigerians displaced and 431 have died as a result of what local authorities have called the worst flooding in over 40 years, with 30 of the 36 states affected since the month of July. According to the authorities and the Nigerian Red Cross (NRC), the torrential rains have flooded much of the southwestern states of Delta and Bayelsa, affecting 350 communities and leaving 120,000 homeless. The rains started in July in Plateau State in central Nigeria, in August, it even reached the states of Borno, Cross River, Ebonyi, Nassarawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Katsina and Kebbi, then continued in September in Taraba Benue, Niger, Kaduna and Kano, before touching Delta and Bayelsa between September and October (see Fides 21/09/2012).
Thousands of people who had taken shelter in temporary camps in the states of Delta and Bayelsa were forced to move again when the rains arrived there too. In the capital of Bayelsa, Yenagoa, 3,000 people live in the Sports Complex in Ovom. Thousands of houses, about 20 health centers and 5 hospitals, as well as dozens of schools, churches and government buildings have been destroyed or damaged in the state of Delta. Six of the eight districts of Bayelsa are completely flooded. Most of the schools that are in the affected areas have been forced to close or have been occupied by squatters. It is still not known how many hectares of crops have been lost but the farmers are sure of having lost everything, including the fields of manioc and cocoa. Activities related to fisheries have also been flooded. The aid agencies are overloaded with requests and they immediately proceeded to evacuate the communities most devastated by providing tents, cooking utensils, health services and basic necessities in Lagos. There is also an urgent need for food. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 11/10/2012)

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