



AFRICA/NIGER - Diseases, floods, damage to agriculture: heavy rains continue to hit the country

Niamey (Agenzia Fides) - As a result of the rising water levels recorded during the annual floods, expected until February, about 800 families from Niger have been transferred from areas along the river Niger. The flooding comes just a few months after torrential rains which in August and September 2012 over 500,000 people were forced to flee, caused the death of another 80, flooded thousands of rice fields and caused extensive damage to agriculture. Some of the families whose homes and farms were flooded, are among those who now find themselves in safer areas of the country. Approximately 7,000 have been relocated in Séno, a city which is part of one of the five districts of Niamey, where authorities have welcomed the population which have come from the banks of the Niger. The first form of aid received is manioc flour, sugar, blankets and 30,000 francs equal to \$60, but more is still needed. In Séno a mobile clinic was also improvised to face the most common infections such as malaria, diarrhea and those concerning the respiratory tract. Of 40 patients per day at least 15 are children. The government has promised to reclaim 70 hectares of land to accommodate families affected by the floods. Some of these have gone back to the bank of the river after they had been transferred following the heavy rains of 2010. Niger is one of the countries most affected by the floods in the Sahel that have killed hundreds of people. The torrential rains of 2012 were caused by a monsoon. While farmers have been badly damaged, we expect an improvement in food security since the rainy season has improved crops and pastures in many parts of the country. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 17/01/2013)