



## **AFRICA/TANZANIA - The Country commits itself to prohibiting child labor in gold mines**

Dodoma (Agenzia Fides) - Child labor in gold mines is one of the heaviest wounds that affect Tanzania. Children who are employed in the mines are orphaned or living in precarious conditions, they often do not reach 8 years of age. Not only must they endure heavy physical work but are also at risk of mercury poisoning that due to the toxicity of the vapors that directly attack the central nervous system, can cause permanent disabilities. Despite the fact that there are laws in the Country prohibiting the exploitation of children, these are not respected. The complaint comes from the NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW). The majority of adults do not know the health risks caused by working in the mines, and health services in Tanzania are not able to diagnose and treat mercury poisoning. This situation has also affected the education of these young workers who do not have the time to attend school and are attracted by earning money. Often the girls who go to the fields in surrounding areas suffer sexual assault, and end up being victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes. HRW reminded the Tanzanian government that the Country has ratified several international agreements to protect the rights of children. In January 2013, Tanzania also helped to draft a new treaty for the reduction of mercury exposure, supported by 140 other Governments, and will be adopted by the end of October. The gold extracted from Tanzanian fields has United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, South Africa, China as its main destinations and the UK who are also exporters. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 03/09/2013)