

DRC has west Africa's highest rate of malnutrition

BRAZZAVILLE - The Democratic Republic of Congo has the highest rate of malnutrition in central and west Africa, affecting 43% of children under five, UNICEF said on Tuesday.

Marianne Flach, the representative of the UN children's agency in the Congo, said at the opening of a regional workshop on reducing malnutrition that in central Africa, some countries have a rate of chronic malnutrition which is alarming.

At least 75 experts from different countries in central Africa are taking part in a workshop being held in a northern suburb of Brazzaville.

The DRC has been affected by successive wars resulting in high levels of malnutrition. It is followed by the Central African Republic (40.7%) and Cameroon (32.5%)

Flach said the Congo Republic had 175,000 young children suffering from chronic malnutrition, a rate of 24.4%.

"Chronic malnutrition is a plague that affects several countries in Africa. It is the underlying cause of 35% of deaths and can appear in different forms," Flach added.

She called for a co-ordinated multi-sector response to eradicate malnutrition.

According to UNICEF, chronic malnutrition shows itself in children by a delayed growth rate, which has a very negative impact on the health of the child and exposes them to higher risks of infection from many diseases.

Source: *AFP* via I-NET Bridge