Drought

Rural projects help contain crisis

**Drought 'tests' the changed Ethiopia**

**FEIDET-ADIS ABEBA, Addis Ababa**

Epidemics and a climate change-related drought have killed about 700,000 livestock in a remote part of Ethiopia, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization said Sunday. The UN agency said 260,000 head of livestock had died in the central region of Oromia alone, but the toll could rise to a million in a worst-case scenario.

Minister of Agriculture, Meles Ambewal, said 70,000 head of livestock had died in the central Oromia region alone, but the toll could rise to a million in a worst-case scenario. He added that the government had established contingency plans to ensure food security for the affected communities.

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There are concerns that the drought could worsen the impact of the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region, where hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced by fighting between the government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The conflict has displaced more than 400,000 people, with others internally displaced by the conflict.

"We are concerned by the ongoing conflict in Tigray, which has displaced hundreds of thousands of people and internally displaced people," said WFP Country Director Veronica Bigotus.

"There is a need for urgent action to avert a humanitarian crisis," she said.

In Addis Ababa, the capital, hundreds of thousands of people have been left homeless by the conflict, and aid workers have reported shortages of food and medical supplies.

"In Addis Ababa, people are struggling to find food and medical supplies," said WFP Country Director Veronica Bigotus.

"Many people have lost their homes and livelihoods, and there is a real danger of a humanitarian crisis," she said.

The conflict has also displaced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in the Tigray region, and experts have warned of a potential humanitarian crisis.

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