

U.N.: Millions of Africans starve

ROME (AP) - An estimated 11 million people in the Horn of Africa "are on the brink of starvation" because of severe drought and war, with some deaths already being reported in Kenya, the United Nations said Friday.

People in Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia need food aid, water, new livestock and seeds, the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization said in a statement.

"Millions of people are on the brink of starvation in the Horn of Africa due to recent severe droughts coupled with the effects of past and ongoing conflicts," the agency said.

FAO economist Shukri Ahmed said the region's dry season had begun and the rains forecast for March and April are not expected to be significant.

Normally, the herdsmen of the area would move from place to place for water and food for their livestock, but the recent drought had covered too large a swath of territory for them, Ahmed said.

"The whole area is affected," he said. "The situation is deteriorating."

The FAO is calling for domestic food purchases in areas where harvests are expected to be favorable and food aid imports elsewhere, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said at U.N. headquarters in New York.

The World Food Program is now feeding 1.2 million drought victims, "but fears this figure could more than double to 2.5 million," Dujarric said.

The food situation in Somalia and eastern Kenya is particularly serious, the FAO said. Ahmed said local newspapers, citing Kenyan medical officials, have reported at least 30 famine-related deaths.

The government of Kenya

has said its efforts to distribute food to famine-stricken areas in its north have been hampered by the nation's nomadic culture and poor infrastructure. President Mwai Kibaki has declared a national disaster.

In Somalia, the secondary rainy season from October to December failed in most of the eight agricultural regions in the south, "resulting in widespread crop failure" that could be the worst in a decade, the agency said.

The country of 7 million that has not had an effective government since clan-based warlords overthrew dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991. Warlords then turned on each other.

Nearly 150,000 people in Djibouti — or almost a fifth of the population — are believed to be facing food shortages because of drought, FAO said.

In Ethiopia, food shortages have been reported in the east and south, even though the prospects for the current harvest were favorable, the agency said. It said more than \$40 million in aid was needed to stave off starvation.

About 3,000 U.N. soldiers guard the frontier between longtime enemies Ethiopia and Eritrea after a two-year war ended in 2000. Tensions have risen in recent weeks, with both countries massing troops along border and Eritrea restricting peacekeeping activities.

The World Food Program has said Somalia needed 64,000 tons of food aid through June, but only 16,700 tons had been donated.

The agency recently added 200,000 students to a school meal program in northern Kenya, pushing the total number of Kenyan children receiving the free meals to 1.3 million, he said.

Smoking

(Continued from Page 14)

dollar the United States spends on tobacco prevention, the tobacco industry is paying \$28 [million a day] to market its deadly products — a fact that paints a bleak picture for the health of our nation."

Legacy, National African-American Tobacco Prevention Network the National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention, and other anti-tobacco advocates have engaged in heated battles against youth smoking, including a campaign against flavored cigarettes, which they see particularly targeted Black teens to get them hooked. Eighty percent of smokers start before the age of 18, according to the CDC.

Meanwhile, the tobacco industry continues to do damage, Heaton states.

"Tobacco use kills 1,200 Americans every day and 450,000 every year. More people die from tobacco-related diseases than from AIDS, alcohol use, drugs, fires, car accidents, murders and suicides combined," said Heaton. "It is the nation's leading preventable cause of death."

In 2004, the American Legacy Foundation awarded a \$4.5 million, three-year grant to a coalition of six national African-American organizations — the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, the NAACP, the National Urban League, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the National Conference of Black Mayors and the National Association of Neighborhoods — to help curb tobacco use among African-Americans.

In response to the study, Legacy issued a statement making three recommendations that the public health community and the community in general can take to continue reducing youth smoking:

- Encourage the states' commitment to spending tobacco settlement dollars to youth smoking-prevention campaigns and to educate people on how to quit.

- Find a way to restore the National Public Education Fund. A shift in tobacco sales market share allowed the tobacco industry to stop payments to this fund established in the Master Settlement Agreement. As a result, limited funding is now available for the Truth program, credited for 22 percent of the overall decline in youth smoking between 2000 and 2002, when the campaign was fully funded.

- Continue to document the impact of smoking in the movies on American youth. A new study released just last month in the journal, *Pediatrics*, showed that more than one-third of American adolescents between 10 and 14 years of age started smoking as a direct result of exposure to smoking in films. Legacy recommends that keeping smoking out of movies rated G, PG, and PG-13 movies could prevent smoking among youth.

But despite the well-publicized statistics on tobacco deaths, Adams — a smoker since his mid-teens — appears to be a participant in the new and dangerous trend of holding on to the habit.

"I don't know," he answers nonchalantly about the possibility of quitting. "I've thought about it."

Your Horoscope Says... Jan. 12-Jan. 18

ARIES

Some business of yours will be delayed, but have fun while you wait. Take your mind off it. Have faith. Go out on the town. Have a ball! You may even want to schedule a short getaway. Enjoy!

Soul Affirmation: I can love even the family I don't like.

Lucky Numbers: 38, 42, 49

TAURUS

You will need to do a balancing act. Your agenda for the next few weeks will become increasingly busy. A variety of emotional entanglements will pull you in. Be careful what you promise. You're going to be held to account. Try meditation.

Soul Affirmation: I give thanks for all the gifts that a cheerful spirit brings.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 45, 50

GEMINI

Flexibility might worry you at times. You might feel that you are bending too much. Not so! Bend further. Communicate your willingness to adapt. Take the path laid out by someone else, and when you look up, you'll be further down the path where your reward lies.

Soul Affirmation: I accept myself for who I really am this week.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 32, 37

CANCER

At last, you're on the right track. Things have been moving up and down for you like a roller coaster, but the turbulence has come to an end. Learn from these past few weeks, and use this knowledge to enhance the way you handle trying situations in the future.

Soul Affirmation: I give others a chance to be themselves.

Lucky Numbers: 19, 23, 54

LEO

Now is a good time to plan a visit to new places where you can experience new adventures. Write a letter or e-mail to someone who is close to but you haven't seen for some time.

Soul Affirmation: I carefully communicate my feelings to those I love.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 30, 39

VIRGO

Give yourself a chance to gain a big victory by keeping your mind open to the possibilities of cooperation from an unlikely person. As you focus on the positive picture, new plans will open up to you. Act on them. Your actions this week will be very successful.

Soul Affirmation: I communicate with love this week.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 40, 43

LIBRA

Keep your ego under control in a relationship with your competitor. You will find working together will benefit you professionally. Sharing your knowledge and expertise will earn you respect. Respect will expand possibilities.

Soul Affirmation: I let all social upheavals pass me by.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 8, 17

SCORPIO

Let yourself be captured by the majesty of nature. The man-made life can dull your passion for the wonders of the universe all around you. Spend time outdoors this week. Take notice of and delight in features of the natural environment that you take for granted.

Soul Affirmation: I speak ill of no one.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 49, 51

SAGITTARIUS

How often do you hear that something was impossible only to find out later that it was easy? This week you might hear the nay-saying voice louder than usual. Ignore it more completely

than you have in the past. Go for it. Adventurous efforts will pay off for you this week.

Soul Affirmation: I have the courage to speak my mind with love in every word.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 23, 46

CAPRICORN

Nothing is faultless, so waiting until it is will be a waste of time. This week is a good week to learn to really enjoy an imperfect situation. All that you need for happiness is inside of you. You are well aware of that this week, so spend all week being happy in this imperfect world.

Soul Affirmation: Positive emotions are my constant friend this week.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 20, 29

AQUARIUS

Since all the world's a stage. It's your world. You can be a master at creating the self you need to be in order to accomplish what you need to get done. For example, if you really want the promotion, act as if you already have it. If you want to be a lover, act like one.

Soul Affirmation: Working behind the scenes to bring peace is a worthy task.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 41, 42

PISCES

You'll be pulled towards being argumentative. Immediately move away from the center of combat. Make a game of avoiding confrontations. Work hard at keeping positive vibrations running around in your head. Be confident that nothing will fall behind as you dodge situations that are contentious.

Soul Affirmation: The romantic side of life is most appealing to me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 19, 23

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