

Press release  
For immediate release

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## **UNOPS Hand Over Surveying Drones to Support Smart Farming in Ethiopia**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – UNOPS has handed over 9 surveying drones to the Ministry of Irrigation & Lowlands of Ethiopia. The handover ceremony took place on October 7, 2025 in the presence of His Excellency Dr. Abraham Belay, Minister of Irrigation & Lowlands.

The drones are designed to bring practical solutions to farmers and communities across Ethiopia. With their advanced sensors, they can estimate crop yields even before harvest, giving farmers a clearer picture of what to expect and how to plan ahead. They can also monitor crop health, spotting early signs of pests or disease that might otherwise go unnoticed until too late. In irrigation and soil management, the drones help prevent common challenges like water loss, fertilizer waste, or equipment failures that can damage plants and reduce harvests.

The high-quality images they capture can also be transformed into vegetation maps, helping experts and farmers make better decisions about land use and crop rotation. Beyond crops, the technology supports the wider rural environment: it can aid forestry and wetland management, and even allow farmers to remotely check on their cattle, ensuring that livestock have safe grazing areas and access to water. Together, these applications make farming more efficient, sustainable, and resilient helping farmers protect their livelihoods and secure food for their communities.

Speaking at the event, Ms Worknesh Mekonnen, UNOPS Director, Horn of Africa Multi Country Office and Djibouti and Representative to the AU, said: "These drones will give the Ministry of Irrigation & Lowlands powerful tools to better serve farmers across Ethiopia. By helping the Ministry monitor crops, water use, and livestock more effectively, the drones will support smarter decisions that directly benefit rural communities. Our partnership is about providing the Ministry with the necessary support in key areas, enabling it to play a stronger role in advancing Ethiopia's national strategy for enhanced productivity, food security, and sustainable development."

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