Session 2: Group Discussion

Joint review of proposed solutions

Gender power imbalance, prevalent gender inequalities, impunity and gender discrimination remain the root causes of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in Ethiopia. While recognizing that women, girls, men and boys face SGBV, women and girls nevertheless continue to be the most affected (*Gender Justice* UNDP, 2018). Women and girls collecting firewood or grass for domestic use (from cooking to lighting) are at heightened risk of facing such SGBV incidents. The lack of lighting around the refugee camps also enhances the risk of SGBV during the night when accessing services. Although community-driven mitigations measures are in place, in the form of organised groups for collection of firewood and grass, and others could be put in place, such as patrolling by the shurtas[1] of the routes used, the risk of SGBV will remain, while women and girls will have to walk long distances to find fuel for domestic use and there is a lack of individual household and communal lighting will prevent safe access to services.

Access to safe and sustainable energy is key to the protection and well-being of refugees. It is thus of importance to determine how to address the "needs for domestic and community services in a safe and sustainable manner without fear or risk to their health, well-being and personal security" (*Ethiopia SAFE Strategic Plan 2015).* As such, one of the six (6) priority areas identified in the National Refugee Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2017-2010) is to provide a safe environment and safe access to domestic fuel and natural resources.

Proposed solutions in Gambella

Bio-fuels

- Through the distribution of briquette and briquette stoves, walking long distances to fetch fuel for domestic use will be limited or avoided completely. The biomass needed to make briquettes is available in Gambella. An assessment conducted by the Organization for Sustainable Development (OSD) found that there is abundant biomass to produce briquettes in the vicinity of the refugee camps. The available bio-mass, among others, include elephant grass, forest trees byproducts, agri-wastes such as maize, cotton and rice stalks that can be sourced from large scale commercial farms. Briquettes can be made manually for smaller quantities or using machines for larger quantities. The link created in the value chain while manufacturing briquettes, will also support peaceful co-existence between refugee and host communities.

Bio-ethanol

- The use of ethanol with ethanol stoves would also ensure that women and girls do not venture far from the camps for fuel wood collection purposes. Ethanol is a very cheap bio-fuel locally produced as a by-product of sugar. Currently, the two factories (Finchwuha and Methara sugar factories) alone produce 30-40 million liters of ethanol. Out of this less than 10 million liters of

[1] Shurtas are members of refugee ccommunity based security structure

ethanol is used to blend petrol at the national level and very little of it goes for liquor and pharmaceutical factories, while the remaining balance is either stored or damped. An additional twelve sugar factories are currently under development, in addition to Finchwuha and Methara, with the potential to access 300-400 million liters of ethanol each year.

Connecting refugee camps to the national grid

- All of the refugee camps in Gambella are within the proximity of the national grid that would provide access to energy for all refugees in the camps. Grid connectivity would enable the establishment of communal kitchens to provide energy access for the refugees to cook their meals, as well as to ensure school feeding programs as well as in-patient services among others. The cost of electricity is very low.

Biogas

- Biogas is a complementary source of energy in camps with high presence of livestock; either owned by refugees or the host community, to partly respond to the cooking fuel demands of the refugee populations.

Woodlot development

- Planting fast growing trees dedicated to energy provision and harvesting using short rotation could assist in responding to the energy demand. Refugees and the refugees and host communities may be training on tree planting and management. The approach is consistent with the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) policy of the country.

Lighting

- *At household level:* Distribution of solar lamps and solar home systems serve to improve safety and security at household level. *At community level:* Communal street lighting would improve conditions of the safety and security in certain locations such as water points, communal latrines, gathering spaces, schools, market areas, places of worship, playing grounds etc. While both solar lamps distribution and street lighting activities have been taking place in Gambella, current coverage is far from covering identified needs.

Integrating a Community-Based Approach

For any of the above-mentioned solutions, the success of the initiative is dependent on the buy in from and the full engagement of the community. Community members, particularly women and girls with regards to cooking fuel, should be involved at all stages: for the identification response activities; the design of the stoves and lighting systems; and implementation and monitoring. Consultations with the refugee community should be advanced to ensure that they are familiar with the new alternatives provided and understand the benefits and the challenges they present. In addition, factors to be considered when introducing alternatives include cultural acceptance, affordability, practicality and sustainability. Training should be integrated to guarantee that the chosen options are used correctly, with ongoing monitoring conducted in order to receive relevant feedback to better fine-tune the initiative.

Accordingly, in relation to communal lighting, the community should be fully involved when deciding how to prioritize the location of street lighting. Their full engagement from the onset may facilitate willingness to contribute to safeguarding and maintenance of the systems. By and large, the

technologies to be introduced should entail a practicable business model enabling the target populations to shift from dependency to self–reliance.