

Conference Summary

Energy for Displaced People: A Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement

Hosted by GIZ, Berlin, Germany, 15th – 16th January 2018

Vision

Every person affected by conflict or natural disaster has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services by 2030

- Overview -

In January 2018 in Berlin, UN agencies, donors, civil society groups and representatives from the private sector came together to take the first steps to develop a *Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement* to ensure that displaced populations are fully included in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7). The vision is that “every person affected by conflict or natural disaster has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services by 2030”.

While achieving SDG 7 relies on countries’ policies, plans and programmes, and will be led by countries for their citizens, displaced people are not an explicit part of these plans and tend to be neglected. Often, they live in isolated areas or informal settlements along-side communities who are sometimes left-behind in development planning and less likely to be a priority. Refugees, for example, are non-nationals and if they are able to return to their homes, they often remain in fragile and post conflict or disaster situations. Therefore, the participants called on all stakeholders for collective efforts to support achieving SDG 7 for displaced people. The foundations of these efforts will be the *Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement (GPA)*, which will be launched during the High-Level Political Forum in July 2018 (HLPF).

Sustainable energy is also vital in supporting the implementation of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) and underpins many of the specific measures being developed by the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and the Global Compact on Migration: access to energy is indispensable in delivering better health and education services as well as livelihood opportunities for displaced people and host communities while also having the potential to address the root causes of displacement.

At the two-day conference, 120 delegates agreed to collaborate in five working groups:

1. Planning and Coordination – Emergency and Protracted Crisis
2. Policy, Advocacy and Host Country Resilience - Supporting National and Local Development Plans
3. Innovative Finance: Public, Private and Public-private Models of Delivery for Sustainability
4. Technical Expertise, Capacity Building and Training
5. Data, Evidence, Monitoring and Reporting

The conference participants agreed to:

- Improve energy practice and policy in displacement settings. This will result in reduced energy costs and associated environmental pressures in host countries, and improved resilience of communities and host countries.

- Involve displaced people and host communities in the new Global Plan of Action to reflect their priorities and needs. This will require coordinated strategies and effective communication across all stakeholders for long-term sustainable energy access.
- Bolster finance for sustainable infrastructure and renewable energy investments. This will include delivering innovative financing methods for the sector.
- Utilize the skills and capacities of displaced people and ensure they have an active role for future energy interventions. This includes creating jobs and livelihood opportunities for both displaced people and host communities where possible.
- Harmonize and standardize high-quality, usable data and evidence across the sector for monitoring, learning and evaluation. This will ensure decision-makers have access to the information they need to make sustainable energy choices and report effectively change.

To conduct these efforts, a steering group of leading organizations has been established to support humanitarian organizations and their partners in delivering priorities on gender and diversity, protection, gender-based violence (GBV), and environmental sustainability – all through the lens of improved and sustainable energy provision.

The Global Plan of Action steering group welcomes organizations who were unable to attend the conference into the community, and is happy to brief anyone on the progress of the plan. Please indicate [here](#) if you would like to receive regular updates on the Global Plan of Action progress.

The GPA will be presented at the following events (as of 14 February 2018):

21-23 February: *SDG 7 Review Conference, Bangkok*
 12 April: *The SET4FOOD final conference, Milan*
 2-3 May: *Sustainable Energy 4All Annual Forum, Lisbon*

It will be launched at the HLPF (9-18 July, Ministerial Segment between 16-18) in New York.

Please contact globalplanofaction@gmail.com for more information or get involved in the discussion forum on ENERGYCoP – a dedicated community of practice for stakeholders engaged in humanitarian energy solutions: [here](#).

Steering Group of the Global Plan of Action:



The conference was supported by:



A Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement

- Background, Visions and Outcomes -

Energy As a Priority Area for Humanitarian Response

'[Thriving, and not just surviving](#)' requires sustainable energy. Without energy, families cannot cook their food, heat and light their homes, or power their businesses. Communities cannot power their health centres, schools or public spaces. Currently humanitarian assistance relies heavily on fossil fuels to enable efficient and rapid delivery of essential services to the communities in need and for powering premises in remote locations.

The world is facing the highest level of displacement on record with 65.6 million people displaced by conflict or crisis (UNCHR, 2017). In addition, disasters displace three times more people than conflicts: an average of 26.4 million people per year have been displaced from their homes by disasters since 2008 (IDMC, 2017), a trend likely to continue with climate change.

Of the displaced people who are living in camp settings, around 90% are without electricity access and 80% rely on solid fuels for cooking. During humanitarian crises, access to safe, reliable, and clean energy for crisis-affected people can be difficult to achieve. With funding shortages and inadequate policies to support the humanitarian community in providing sustainable and clean energy, current energy practices are often inefficient, polluting, unsafe for the users, and harmful to the surrounding environment.

Considering energy needs during response can have a positive impact on aid efficiency on the mid- and longer term: by reducing expenses related to high costs of diesel fuel, more financial resources will be available to spend on protection and immediate assistance. In addition, the long-term health and environmental impacts of polluting fuel sources on displaced people, which reduce the resilience of communities and hamper progress, could be solved with the systematic deployment of renewable energy. Without access to sustainable energy the options for building programmes focused on self-reliance of communities and improving livelihoods are limited.

While it is challenging to integrate sustainable energy at the start of humanitarian programming, it is possible to a certain extent. Energy planning tools, technical guidelines, business models, and procedures already exist to support humanitarian assistance in delivering suitable energy. Working in partnership across humanitarian and development organisations is critical to delivering this.

Energy Enables

Sustainable energy is a key enabler which must be the heart of people-centred responses to displacement situations. The use of energy is a central part of all our day to day lives. Whether that is for boiling water, heating our homes, charging mobile phones, cooking food, or powering schools and offices: energy is at the heart of what we do. Access to sustainable energy is needed to deliver better health, education, and livelihood opportunities for both displaced people and host communities.

Energy enables but it is also essential while working in displacement settings: Many of the core pillars of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) are underpinned by energy:

- (i) *Reception and admission* - electricity is required to power reception centres and during emergency responses. Sustainable energy products such as solar lamps are often included in the emergency provisions provided to displaced people during crises to enhance their quality of life.
- (ii) *Support for immediate and ongoing needs* – sustainable energy is needed for homes, schools, and businesses to enable people to live dignified and productive lives.

- (iii) *Support for host countries and communities* – sustainable energy services can reduce the environmental and resource burden on host governments and local communities. Energy services for camp settings can also be expended to host communities to support their national and regional development plans.
- (iv) *Durable solutions* – affordable electricity is necessary for businesses and access to sustainable energy enables livelihood opportunities. Activities around energy can be combined with training and capacity building to provide know how which can be used for a living after resettlement or repatriation.

The positive impacts of sustainable energy are measurable and quantifiable in terms of reducing costs, limiting carbon emissions, and providing jobs and livelihood opportunities. The Global Plan of Action aims to develop sustainable energy delivery further to support the needs of displaced people globally.

Visions

The case for change is clear. The delegates of the Berlin Conference agreed to collaborate to deliver the vision that: *Every person affected by conflict or natural disaster has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services by 2030*. While the people of concern are at the front and center of our efforts, there is also the infrastructure and operations side of humanitarian response.

For that, the Vision for the system is: *"The share of renewable energy in the humanitarian relief system is increased substantially and energy efficiency in humanitarian operations is improved."* To achieve these overall visions, concrete actions in five key areas will be necessary:

Planning and coordination is vital to ensuring that [no displaced people are left behind](#) in the provision of energy assistance, as well as for the long-term improvement of energy programming through knowledge sharing, learning, and increased collaboration between actors. To be effective, planning and coordination mechanisms must directly engage key decision-makers and staff at all levels. Crucially, displaced people and host communities must be included in the design and implementation of energy programs to ensure that their needs and priorities are reflected.

Policy and advocacy efforts are needed at global, national and agency levels to address energy challenges in humanitarian settings. At an international multilateral level, this means explicitly recognizing the issue of sustainable energy for displaced people in global policy agendas. At national host country level, this means showing where sustainable energy solutions can contribute to national and local sustainable development objectives and facilitate the relevant aid and investment. At agency level, it means incorporating energy considerations and best practice into core programming.

Innovative finance approaches must be explored to support the design and delivery of sustainable energy solutions across the humanitarian sector. There is a need to bolster finance for long term sustainable infrastructure and renewable investments, as well as support humanitarian agencies to incorporate energy programming into their budgets, address energy needs in acute emergencies, and shift to more environmentally sustainable modes of delivery.

Technical expertise and capacity building will prioritize awareness raising, training and capacity building in operational agencies to ensure high quality and well-coordinated field programs. There is a need to holistically outline the specific training and capacity needs of stakeholders across the value chain so user appropriate training methods can be delivered. To better ensure technology adoption, the end user capacity and energy needs are vital to understand. The skills and capacities of displaced people will be utilised to ensure that they have an active role in future energy interventions, ensure they have appropriate technical knowledge to enable delivery, and create jobs and livelihood opportunities for both displaced people and host communities.

Data, evidence, monitoring and evaluation about energy needs and interventions must be high-quality, accurate and relevant for users to ensure programs are reducing energy poverty and the associated protection costs. Relevant data should ideally be collected in every program, utilizing existing mobile platform tools when possible, and integrated into humanitarian response. Non-personalized data should be digitally shared openly between stakeholders. Where possible data should be harmonised and standardised to enable comparison and to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation.

Actions On the Global Plan and from the Working Groups

In recognition that a global, multi-stakeholder plan is the work of years instead of months, we view the Global Plan of Action as an evolving initiative that will go through several stages. A **high level political document** advocating the need for a Global Plan of Action addressing energy access for displaced and crisis-affected people will be launched at the [High Level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) in July 2018. This document will contribute to the review of [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 7](#) and to the two global compacts: [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and the [Global Compact for Migration](#). The steering group invites all stakeholders to deliver concrete, measurable and equitable actions to improve the energy situation in displacement settings.

To support this, a **working-level roadmap** is currently being developed to serve as the base for an effective Global Plan of Action. This roadmap is based on series of key actions as identified through the working groups initiated in Berlin and will contain targets and indicators to serve as a concrete guideline at the practitioner level. Actions for these five working groups are outlined below.

Coordination and Planning

The Planning and Coordination group outlined a number of challenges for the sector, most of which stem from the fact that energy is not yet institutionalized as a formal priority in humanitarian assistance. Consequently, the mandate, mechanisms, and resources to coordinate energy assistance are absent in the humanitarian system. Humanitarian agencies lack the capacity to participate in coordination efforts and are not asked to report on planned actions or progress. Within humanitarian agencies there is a lack of accountability for progress and integration of energy into programming. Often, there are other priorities and a lack of awareness on the issues. To address this, the following concrete actions were suggested for inclusion in the working level roadmap:

- Undertake a broad stakeholder mapping to identify and define all the relevant types of actors engaged in providing energy assistance to displaced people -- e.g. NGOs, governments, funders, the private sector, etc. -- and understand their priorities with reference to humanitarian energy interventions.
- Consider the establishment of a formal, global humanitarian energy coordination body that institutionalizes energy planning. Assess the potential for (or identify the existence of) similar bodies at the national, and/or settlement levels in key countries.
- Identify key gaps in communication among and within organizations working in this sector and develop solutions to address them -- e.g. improving communication from the field staff to the project developers, NGOs and donors.
- Facilitate improved program planning by working with the Data, Evidence, Monitoring and Evaluation group to develop specific tools to identify energy needs and assess impact.
- Collaborate with the Policy and Advocacy group to develop a set of commonly-recognized principles, frameworks, and procedures for energy interventions in displacement settings, and/or incorporate energy into existing procedural frameworks (e.g. Sphere).
- Ensure that all other Working Areas of the Global Plan of Action are informed by previous initiatives and existing resources in the sector.

Policy and Advocacy

A number of policy and advocacy challenges were highlighted by the working group and were divided into three levels, local/national level, agency/implementer level and donor level. At the local/national level, challenges included: national level priorities that may not include displaced populations, lack of a ministry dedicated to humanitarian energy (homeless or deprioritized topic), legal status of displaced populations especially refugees, right to work and access to services, policy/tax disincentives for private sector and other political challenges. At the agency/implementer level, challenges were related to coordination, capacity and expertise on cash programming for energy, procurement policies, lack of accountability and leadership for the sector, the humanitarian-development divide, and lack of rules/guidelines for incorporating energy into humanitarian program cycle. At donor level, challenges included donor driven priorities, limited experience in cash/market based approaches, lack of understanding how energy fits, lack of donor coordination and multi-year financing and policy coherence with climate finance agenda. To address these, concrete actions were suggested for inclusion in the working level roadmap:

- Advocate for humanitarian standards to include energy.
- Work directly with governments and local leaders to gain their support and engagement on the inclusion of energy in displacement settings and to embed change.
- Produce position papers and evidence synthesis on climate solutions, renewable energy technologies, new business models and modes of financing for humanitarian energy.
- Align development partner plans with national priorities and work directly with host government ministries to ensure sustainable energy programmes deliver for both displaced people and host communities.

Innovative Finance

Several challenges were identified within the innovative financing group, including the lack of market segmentation, the need for applicable viable business models, the increased risk of investment, limited energy-as-a-service models, the lack of marketplace entry point for private sector engagement, and the need for financial inclusion of displaced persons. Reliance on existing procurement modes and short-term financial commitments for humanitarian agencies often underpin these problems. Actions include:

- Collect and analyse innovative business models that have potential for upscaling activities.
- Demonstrate successful commercial business models, and share experience of results based financing to access markets.
- Research and policy institutions to develop reports and new tools on infrastructure financing, procurement and risk templates, service models, economic incentives and enabling environment.
- Set up a task force to identify viable business models and instrument for economic incentives for private sector, including pay-as-you-go technologies for solar electricity and cooking solutions.
- Develop methods and concrete actions how private companies, NGOs and research organisations could support humanitarian organisations on learning and capacity building for using new financing and investment processes.

Technical Expertise and Capacity Building

The technical capacity building group identified several challenges, including the difficulty of bridging the gap between programming and technical implementing staff, a lack of awareness on energy efficiency, implementation and the potentials of productive use of energy in host communities and donor organizations, a lack of specialists, lack of technical expertise in procurement, and a lack of knowledge on

the local economies. There are also considerable problems created by high staff turnover rates and limited institutional knowledge as well as a lack of training of displaced people and host communities. To address some of these problems, concrete actions were agreed:

- Build technical capacity in humanitarian response, through toolkits, partnering with private sector energy solutions or staffing technical energy experts in situations of displacement, to enable efficient use of resources, and ensure relevant stakeholders have the appropriate technical knowledge at their level appropriately deliver of sustainable energy.
- Enable bottom-up community solutions by co-designing training and materials with local communities to ensure appropriate process and content.
- Develop tools and training programmes specifically on humanitarian energy to increase awareness and improve technical skills considering the sustainability of such programmes.
- Holistically identify technical expertise, capacity building and training gaps and conduct stakeholder mapping to fill the gaps with appropriate training and capacity building solutions.
- Collect best practices that demonstrate successful implementation and adoption of renewable energy technologies in humanitarian settings for lasting impact.

Data, Evidence, Monitoring and Evaluation

A number of problems were also identified by the data working group, including a lack of general data and readily available information, limited in-depth studies that compare cross-cutting issues or regional evidence, very few detailed studies on the impacts of existing programmes, and a lack of standardised or published information. To address some of these problems the group agreed to:

- Increase the amount of primary data on humanitarian energy available, concretely by applying for research and data funding to develop impact measurements, quantitative data sets, evidence on gender, energy and protection, and effective monitoring and evaluation tools.
- Coordinate and share existing data more effectively: firstly, by creating a mailing list and an online data sharing forum through use of EnergyCop, Energypedia, OCHA HDX, UNHCR's forthcoming open data platform for monitoring of energy programs, or other resources.
- Develop common sets of indicators and metrics for energy for displacement: humanitarian agencies and academia to work together to reform systems and deliver best-practice models and evidence.
- Define a common framework for impact measurement for the sector: design tools and indicators to measure progress, impact and quantify how sustainable energy improves the lives of displaced people.
- Encourage open access to data: Draft open access statements and data sharing obligations (where needed) which can be included at the programme design stage and integrated into humanitarian energy terms of reference.
- Create an ontology for data, evidence, monitoring, evaluation and learning in the energy for displacement sector to guide practitioners and researchers in delivering high-quality evidence and align it with already existing data formats (such as in the SE4All/ ESMAP methodology).

For more information on any of these actions or if you would like to be involved in the working groups, please contact globalplanofaction@gmail.com.

Further Information, Organisations and Supporters

We encourage the sharing of this exciting initiative with your organizations and networks. Please feel free to share the press releases generated by the [Moving Energy Initiative](#) and the [Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves](#). To receive updates on the GPA and further information about energy access for displaced people, the following channels are available:

If you would like to be notified about major developments relating to the Global Plan of Action, please sign up for the [SAFE mailing list](#). For community discussions, we have set up a discussion forum on [ENERGYCoP](#) – a dedicated community of practice for stakeholders engaged in humanitarian energy.

The organisations leading the development of the Global Action Plan are UNHCR, UNITAR, IOM, GIZ, The Moving Energy Initiative, Practical Action, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, and the UN Foundation. The Global Action Plan Conference organisers thank the Federal Foreign Office of Germany for their support for this initiative.