

UNHCR ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOS
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International Conference Center Geneva

DISCUSSION PAPER

Title of session: Unlocking the Potential for Refugees & Host Communities through Energy & Infrastructure

Date: Friday, 5 July 2019

Time/Room: 13:30 – 15:30 – Room 4

Executive Summary:

The provision of energy and infrastructural support to refugees and host communities can be fundamental to survival, provides employment and educational opportunities, facilitates productivity and can significantly enhance social cohesion.

The session on 'Unlocking the Potential for Refugees & Host Communities through Energy & Infrastructure' will explore five key subthemes, which each fall within the scope of 'Energy & Infrastructure' and are essential to the well-being and resilience of refugees and host communities: Energy; environment; WASH; Health; Shelter and Settlements.

In the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum, developing contributions and highlighting good practices that promote the inclusion of refugees and host communities in these subthemes will be core to the session.

In particular, the session will address:

- **Energy/Environment:** the accommodation and environmental impacts of large numbers of refugees, including the promotion of integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems in both urban and rural areas;
- **Shelter & Settlements:** the rationale for strengthening infrastructure to facilitate access to appropriate accommodation for refugees and host communities;
- **Health:** the inclusion of refugees in national health systems through relevant health and infrastructure interventions, as well as capacity building of human resources;
- **WASH:** good practices around protecting water resources (groundwater modelling, appropriate sewage disposal, monitoring water quality, partnering with the local water authorities).

The purpose of this session is to gather key individuals from the humanitarian community who lead on the sub-themes within 'Energy & Infrastructure' in order to showcase best practices for inspiration and to help guide pledges or commitments in the lead up to the Global Refugee Forum; provide a broad overview of the subthemes with a particular focus on unmet needs and potential opportunities; share experiences between the organizations; and discuss

practical methods by which NGOs and other civil society actors could contribute to the 'energy & infrastructure' theme at the Global Refugee Forum by way of pledges or commitments.

The two-hour discussion will include short 'TED-talk' presentations by a range of civil society organizations most active in the respective subthemes, a panel discussion by experts in the field and an opportunity for questions and comments from the floor.

Concept Note:

Background and link to the theme [see Concept note for the overall theme for reference]

The provision of energy and infrastructural support to refugees and host communities can be fundamental to survival, provides employment and educational opportunities, facilitates productivity and significantly enhance social cohesion. The 'Unlocking the Potential for Refugees & Host Communities through Energy & Infrastructure' session will explore five key subthemes, which fall within the scope of 'Energy & Infrastructure' and are essential to the well-being and survival of refugees and host communities: energy; environment; WASH; health; shelter and settlements.

Developing responses and highlighting best practices that promote the inclusion of refugees and host communities in these subthemes will be core to the session, in the full spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum. In particular, the session will:

- Address the accommodation and environmental impacts of large numbers of refugees;
- Focus on the rationale for strengthening infrastructure to facilitate access to appropriate accommodation for refugees and host communities;
- Promote the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems in both urban and rural areas.
- Address the inclusion of refugees in national health systems through health infrastructure.

Access to energy has significant humanitarian, developmental, and environmental benefits. It supports the reduction of the global carbon footprint and reduces competition for energy resources between refugees and host communities. It increases safety for women and children by providing alternative fuel sources and reducing exposure to risk when gathering firewood. It supports health and safety by reducing the use of hazardous cooking and heating methods. It facilitates various forms of education, including online learning, and enhances productivity, entrepreneurship, and livelihoods. Similarly, there is an opportunity to reduce the reliance of refugees, host communities, and humanitarian organizations on high-emissions sources of electricity (such as diesel generators) by replacing them with low-emissions alternatives (such as solar panels). Large influxes of refugees can also place pressure on local service providers. This session will address how humanitarian actors can design their programs in a way that supports existing structures in coping with a large increase in demand instead of facilitating parallel systems of governance/service provision?

Within the context of infrastructure, **Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** programmes can ensure the delivery of water and sanitation services to millions of people in camps, outside of camps and in urban settings in a manner that can have positive effects on protection, nutrition, education, food security and livelihoods and the environment. Furthermore, **access to health services** (including mental health and psychosocial support), equivalent to that of the host population, remains a key objective. Facilitating the inclusion of refugees in national health systems through health infrastructure and national insurance systems remains a central

objective, in particular in the spirit of the GCR. The session will address host country contexts where refugees have increased mental health needs compared to the host community and the presence of funding for humanitarian mental health support can be utilized in ways that strengthen national mental health care development. **Shelter** is a vital survival mechanism in times of crisis or displacement and is key to restoring personal security, self-sufficiency and dignity, be it in urban and rural areas or camps. Adequate shelter provides protection from the elements and a space in which they can live and store belongings as well as privacy, comfort and emotional security.

The two-hour discussion will include short 'TED-talk' type presentations by a range of civil society organizations most active in the respective subthemes, a panel discussion by experts in the field and an opportunity for the audience to ask questions and share ideas for good practices and contributions that can feed in to the Global Refugee Forum.

Objective(s) of the session [Development of the executive summary provided for the detailed agenda]

The purpose of this session is to gather key individuals from the humanitarian community who lead on the various sub-themes within 'Energy & Infrastructure' in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Showcase best practices within the relevant sectors for inspiration and to help guide pledges or commitments in the lead up to the Global Refugee Forum
- Provide broad overviews on the respective subthemes with a particular focus on unmet needs and potential opportunities
- Share experiences between the organizations
- Discuss practical methods by which NGOs and other civil society actors could contribute to the Global Refugee Forum by way of pledges or commitments towards the 'energy & infrastructure' theme.

What would you like to achieve with this session? What would be the follow-up actions to it?]

The session will serve as an opportunity for relevant experts, NGOs and other civil society organizations to discuss the 'Energy & Infrastructure' theme and its relevance in the context of the Global Refugee Forum; explore potential entry-points for engagement; and provide a platform by which NGOs and other stakeholders could potentially showcase best practices or contribute at the GRF by way of pledges or commitments.

Methodology & choreography [panel discussion, break-out sessions, pigeonhole, video presentation, mixture of different elements]

The choreography is envisaged as follows:

- The session will open with an introduction by the moderator – **10 minutes**
- This will be followed by 5-6 brief "TED-talk" presentations by a wide-range of NGOs and stakeholders speaking to the relevant sub-themes, focusing on best-practices and potential areas of opportunity for the GRF – **30 minutes**
- A moderated panel discussion will be held – **30 minutes**
- Session will close with discussion and Q&A from the floor (as well as through Pigeonhole) – **50 minutes**

Video and audio will be required as well as individual microphones for TED-talk presentations.