

# Cooperation and Challenges in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Ethiopia

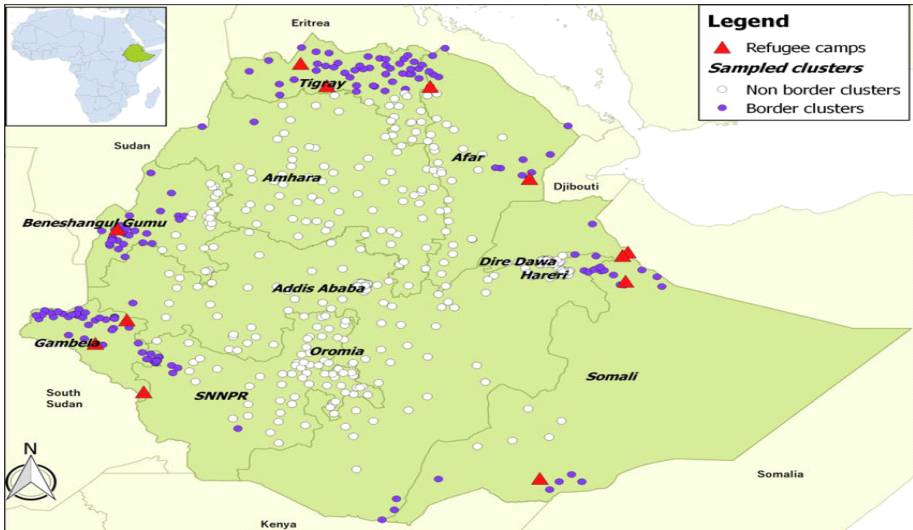
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## ABSTRACT

*Our world is in a serious crisis that emanates from different social, political, and economic interests. The greater vulnerability due to these crises occurs in the global south, of which the sub-Saharan region is most affected. The natural and manmade crises have further aggravated the situation. The region is notable not for its progressive nature but one that's hit continually with catastrophes and disaster that has displaced millions of refugees. Ethiopia has taken the initiative to provide aid and assistance to settle the refugees and their integration. It is due to its hospitable culture towards foreigners and its Government's pledge to achieve the New York declaration. Ethiopia has attempted to apply the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) with the participation of UN agencies and donors to reduce the risks for the refugees compared to the refugees in other countries of the region. It is creditable to get effective outcomes from a developing country with many internal problems to address. Yet many challenges remain to achieving the New York declaration. The research paper aims to analyze Ethiopia's commitment to creating local community awareness and raising ownership towards alleviating the refugee's livelihood, providing education, job, and free movement. The conceptual and practical framework of community-based cross-sectional assessment design has guided the study. The present study concludes that although refugees' protection is under-resourced and faces crucial challenges, cooperation to mitigate the challenges is strong and sustaining.*

**Keywords:** Refugee, Refugee Crisis, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the New York Declaration, Administration of Refugees and Returnees Agency (ARRA), Global Compact on Refugees.



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## Limitations of the Research

This research paper has limitations in collecting facts from refugee camps across Ethiopia. The sample size is limited to interviewing ARRA's acting director and using documents from other sources. It is due to the unavailability of resources and depends on the writer's knowledge (served as chairperson of the CRRF from December 2017 to May 2018).

## Research Questions

Though several research questions can be identified, the present paper analyses the role of CRRF in resolving the refugee problem and the challenges faced in its sustainability. The paper also discusses whether international cooperation is satisfactory in supporting the CRRF in achieving its goals.

## Introduction

Ethiopia, located in the volatile region of east Africa, has been a home for thousands of refugees and asylum seekers for centuries. It is known that the country has a long history of hosting refugees and maintains

an open-door asylum policy by giving humanitarian access and protection to those seeking refuge, which traces its history back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The country is now home to 844,589 (UNHCR,2022), which makes the country the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest refugee-hosting nation in Africa and the 9<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. These refugees came mainly from South Sudan, followed by Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, and other countries like Yemen and Kenya. The country keeps its doors open for new arrivals. The Administration of Refugees and Returnees Agency (ARRA), a government refugee overrunning body, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including the World Food Program (WFP), work in collaboration with NGOs, local and international organizations to alleviate the problems and respond effectively for the needs and concerns of the beneficiaries. The Government of Ethiopia officially launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). For its commencement and in its effort to provide protection and assistance to refugees, the UNHCR, donors, humanitarian and development actors, the private sector, and others have provided enormous support to the Government of Ethiopia. Forced displacement has reached an unprecedented level, with over 65 million people worldwide uprooted by rising violence, insecurity, and persecution. The African region faces immense challenges of forced displacement. The Horn of Africa is one region that continues to produce and host large numbers of refugees. The major assistance and responses provided for the Person of Concern (POC) are essential services, including food, water, shelter, health services, education, and protection. Others are incorporation, empowerment, capacity building, and livelihood programs.

## **Literature Review**

History exhibits different kinds of interventions in the name of safeguarding humanity. In most cases, powerful states used humanitarian interventions to ensure their dominance. The real purpose of humanitarian intervention is still debatable, whether to follow legality or moral ideals; the ethical or legal justifications for interventions elaborated in the liberal and realistic perspectives.

With over 89.3 million people displaced (UNHCR, 2022), displacement is at an all-time high. The whole world is dealing with a refugee crisis of unparalleled proportions. According to *Morrison & Ruauudel* (2017),

unrest, demographic change, and increased political attention have resulted from forced relocation and population migrations. International Crisis Group (2016) states that failure to respond to the refugee crisis risks escalating hostilities and increasing refugee flows.

In recent years, press coverage of refugees has not been adequate despite the fact that the global refugee crisis is spiraling. According to World Vision(2022),”thirty years have passed since Somalia’s refugee crisis began. Extreme weather conditions, such as the north’s drought; and the south and center’s unusually heavy rainfall, have greatly influenced Somalis’ capacity to maintain their way of life. Famine outbreaks and continued violence have made the problem worse. A severe famine killed over 260,000 individuals between 2010 and 2012; 133,000 were children under five”.

The World Vision (2022) further notes that

the drought emergency in the country has also intensified, causing about 572,000 people to be displaced internally between October 2021 and February 2022. It adds to the 650,000 Somalis displaced by serious flash floods in 2020. Currently, more than 750,000 refugees are living in neighboring countries (Kenya, Yemen, and Ethiopia), and over 2.9 million people are internally displaced in the country. (World Vision, 2022)

Meanwhile, at the 2016 leaders’ summit in New York, UNHCR was tasked to develop a Global Compact on refugees in the UN General Assembly as part of the New York declaration. The Compact hopes to bring in a broader array of stakeholders to help host countries manage the refugee response, including the private sector, development agencies, and multi-lateral finance institutions. The draft document of the Global Compact (third formal consultation) in April 2018 set four major goals for the success of the CRRF enumerated as follows:

(1) an improved system of burden-and responsibility-sharing, measured in terms of the distribution of contributions among states and, where relevant, Other stakeholders- including through the hosting of refugees, making financial contributions, and providing solutions; (2) strengthened national protection systems and response capacities worldwide that safeguard the rights of refugees; (3) enhanced socioeconomic conditions

for refugees and host communities, notably women and girls, measured against the 2030 agenda for sustainable development ('the 2030 Agenda'); 7 and (4) greater efforts to resolve protracted situations, the measure by a reduction in the number of refugees who live in such situations through the achievement of durable solutions. (Global Compact draft doc. 2018 P.2)

The Global Compact moves from past practices where refugees lived in camps receiving similar services to investing in national health and education systems to receiving community benefits alongside refugees. It aimed at doing it gradually through simultaneous actions to build on the recognition that the refugees who can continue to learn, develop skills, and provide for their families while in exile are better placed to rebuild their lives elsewhere or return home when conditions have improved. The Global Compact draft document further states:

Although the Global Compact is not legally binding, it provides a framework for cooperation to ensure that the international community engages more robustly and predictably in support of refugees, their host countries and communities, and in countries of origin where appropriate. It will be operationalized through voluntary but mutually reinforcing and dedicated contributions towards achieving the goals of the global compact set out in paragraph 5. Each state and stakeholder will determine these contributions according to their resources, capacity, and expertise. (Global Compact draft document, 2018p. 2)

The Global Compact on refugees comprises two complementary parts: the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the action program. The April 2018 third formal consultations on the Global Compact in Geneva were the last step in developing the Compact. During April 2018, the third consultation on the general agreement in the context of large movements of refugees and the increasing strain on host countries and resettlement remained a vital tool for protection and finding solutions. It is, therefore, essential to reverse the dwindling options for resettlement. The Global Compact focuses on resettlement planning at the early stages of the refugee influx. It expands the pool of resettlement countries as it is important in ensuring equitable burden and responsibility sharing among member countries. But Hathaway (2019: 593) finds that "rather than proposing, for example, an optional binding protocol to remedy

the operational deficiencies of the Refugee Convention, the refugee agency has instead drafted a highly partial Compact, applying to undefined ‘large’ movements of refugees.” Some scholars are skeptical that it may not address the gaps in the draft and implementation as Hathaway (2019, 593) considers “the Compact as only guideposts for a never-ending series of discussions.”

Although humanitarian intervention and its practicality have been debatable, different international organizations accept serving humanitarian issues as a legal and moral issue. In this regard, the UN is a pioneer in getting and being the vanguard to apply it. The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) affirms that,

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights. In the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. (UN Charter, P.1).

Respecting and defending human rights and refugee protections is not only the sole responsibility of the UN organizations, specifically the UNHCR. Individual countries do have frameworks and legal provisions to protect refugees and their rights. Abebe (2019) observes that though Ethiopia began to apply the CRRF in 2017, for the last twenty years, she has been proactive in promoting sustainable solutions for the self-reliance and economic integration of refugees in protracted situations. On the national level, the Ethiopian constitution of 1995 enshrines:

Civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and people’s rights: The formulae employed by the human rights provisions of the FDRE (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) constitution converge with those of the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The themes of human rights and liberty emphasized in the constitution suggest an insistence on democratic legitimacy. (Ethiopian Human Rights handbook, 2013, p.20)

As UN member states abide by the laws and rules of the regulations, it is obligatory to safeguard the rights of refugees. It is both a legal and moral duty of member states to do it properly and seek support elsewhere for its achievement. The major types of refugee rights to be assured by member states are the following:

The convention establishes the juridical status of refugees and sets the minimum standards of treatment of refugees, including an enumeration of the basic rights to which they are entitled. These include the rights to gainful employment and welfare, identifying papers and travel documents, the applicability of finance charges, and the rights of refugees to transfer their assets to another country where they have been admitted for resettlement. The convention facilitates the naturalization and assimilation of refugees, access to courts, education, social security, housing, and freedom of movement. It also prohibits refugees' expulsion or forcible return unless exceptional circumstances warrant such measures. (Human rights and Refugee Protection Self-study, 2015, p. 21)

Related to this, the predecessor of the AU, viz., the OAU member states, agreed on tackling the unprecedented refugee issue that arose due to the mass displacement of the people because of liberation struggles in the 1960s. The rising numbers of refugees and unrecognized internal displacement became a serious challenge to be addressed and explained as follows:

The OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspect of Refugees Problems in Africa' was adopted in 1969 by member states of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU, now the African Union). It complements the 1951 Convention in that it contains a broader definition of a refugee (Article I), an obligation to make the best efforts to grant asylum (Article II), provision for durable solutions (Article V), and provisions on prohibiting subversive activities by refugees (Article III). (UNHCR, Human Rights and Refugee Protections, 2015, p. 21)

According to this Convention, the term refugee "shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or

the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality (UNHCR, Human Rights and Refugee Protections, 2015,p. 21).” Above all, the humane treatment of refugees is practiced, and it is an obligation in International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Respecting the IHL and practicing it has paramount importance. It has the following benefits:

Human rights instruments usually provide the same treatment for nationals and non-nationals, including refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons. While the 1951 convention contains different criteria for entitlement and, in most cases, the rights are granted based on the most favorable treatment accorded to aliens, under human rights instruments, asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to the same enjoyment of rights as nationals.(UNHCR, Human Rights and refugee protection, p. 23)

Ethiopia is a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 protocol, as well as to the 1969 OAU convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. In 2004, the country notably enacted a national refugee proclamation based on these international and regional refugee conventions. This proclamation is now amended to strengthen the legal components and ultimately create a conducive legal environment for the applications of the CRRF in the country. The Ethiopian Government believes in its very generous commitment to secure the inclusion of refugees in the national development systems. Its plans align with the New York Declaration and the “leave no one behind” promise of the Agenda 2030.

For ordinary citizens in Ethiopia and an official alike, the common acceptable attitude toward refugees is that it is a national obligation to accept refugees. Ethiopians are extending their welcoming arms to those who flee persecution and conflicts based on three basic principles from which the nation’s general refugee policy also springs. First, it is to maintain the country’s longstanding history of hospitality in hosting refugees; second, it is to meet the international obligations expressed in the regional and international refugee-related declarations to which the country is a party; and third, it is to materialize its foreign and



national security policy goal of building sustainable peace with all of its neighbors through strengthening people to people relations. (ARRA report, 2017). [ is the whole para a quote ???? where is the second point]

## **Successes in Cooperation**

Ethiopia's success is notable and achieved with full-fledged cooperation from international donors and UN agencies. This relative success can be evaluated by the frequency of internal conflicts in Ethiopia that need government attention. Ethiopia faced ethnic-based conflicts that put the nation's economy in bad shape and needed donors' support for its recovery; the Government continues to commit itself through its pledge of 2016 of supporting the rising number of refugees.

Ethiopia has extended its solidarity towards those who are forcibly displaced. Ethiopia, throughout its history, has been compassionate and concerned for those who fled their homes due to natural and manmade calamities. The refugee operation in Ethiopia currently hosts one of the largest numbers of refugees in the world, with close to a million-refugee population. When the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was unanimously adopted on September 19, 2016, by the 193 member states of the United Nations at its General Assembly, Ethiopia actively participated in the adoption of the New York Declaration and supported the application of the CRRF. Following meaningful consultations and coordination at all levels with UNHCR and the larger international community, Ethiopia kept its commitment of becoming one of the first countries to initiate the roll-out of the CRRF in February 2017.

On September 20, 2016, at the leaders' summit on refugees co-hosted by Ethiopia in New York, the Government of Ethiopia made groundbreaking policy commitments through the nine pledges, mainly aimed at ultimately creating productive and self-reliant global citizens among refugees and host communities. These policy commitments made at the leader's summit align with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the second Growth and transformation plan of the Government, and the United Nations Development Assistance framework. For a better understanding, Ethiopia's nine pledges, as

mentioned in the CRRF Global Compact draft document, are listed as follows:

- To expand the “out-of-camp” policy to benefit 10% of the current total refugee population
- To provide work permits to refugees and those with permanent residence IDs
- To provide work permits to refugees in the areas permitted for foreign workers
- To increase enrolment of refugee children in preschool, primary, secondary, and tertiary education, without discrimination and within available resources
- To make 10,000 hectares of irrigable land available, to enable 20,000 refugees and host community households (100,000 people) to grow crops
- To allow local integration for refugees who have lived in Ethiopia for over 20 years
- To work with international partners to build industrial parks to employ up to 100,000 individuals, with 30% of the jobs reserved for refugees
- To expand and enhance basic and essential social services for refugees
- To provide other benefits, such as the issuance of birth certificates to refugee children born in Ethiopia and the possibility of opening bank accounts and obtaining driving licenses.

As a result of the policy shifts of the Government of Ethiopia towards refugees, in general, the current refugee response management in the country is based on a mix of three policies: Encampment, out-of-camp, and local integration policies. The Government of Ethiopia, while maintaining its doors open to refugees, envisages gradually putting an end to the encampment policy in the next ten years period and progressively advancing the other two approaches of the out-of-camp and local integration to provide an alternative to camps for the refugees and enhances their socioeconomic opportunities. Crawford & O’Callaghan

(2019) state that the new policies have provisioned freedom of movement for refugees. Still, this freedom is circumscribed by the fact that ARRA has to make provision for the areas for refugee settlements that almost amounts to continuity of Ethiopia's encampment policy which it claims to avoid. Carver (2020, 7) also assert that "Central to the CRRF is a set of ambitions around 'integration': enabling refugees to integrate better into their areas of residence, thereby making them less reliant on humanitarian assistance never designed for medium- to long-term support, and ensuring a higher degree of integration between service delivery and social support systems, improving efficiencies and strengthening local connections."

So far, the Government and the wide array of stakeholders identified in the CRRF have been undertaking preparatory and practical works to implement the nine pledges. Even before the official launch of the CRRF, the Government of Ethiopia and its partners were doing exceptionally well in showcasing to the rest of the world during the CRRF roll-out (ARRA report: 2017). The endeavors undertaken include but are not limited to:

“finalization of the roadmap, amendment of the refugee legislation, increase in enrolment rate at all levels of education with 70% gross enrolment of refugee children in the primary school, allocation of 10,000 hectares of irrigable and cultivable land and ongoing construction of irrigation infrastructure that enables both the refugees and host communities to start production of crops and benefit on an equal basis, continuing preparatory works for the jobs compact, mapping existing resources and services and identification of gaps to facilitate local integration, official commencement of civil registration of refugees, the establishment of clearly defined governance structure for the CRRF together with the steering committee.” (ARRA report: 2017).

Before the opening of the pioneer meeting of the steering committee, which was conducted in the first week of December 2017, reinforcement of the national CRRF coordination unit and successive workshops were formally organized to establish a range of technical committees focusing on the six thematic areas of the nine pledges that were among the key

next steps that helped in moving forward and to implement the promises and practically apply the CRRF.

To materialize its specific commitments and comprehensively strengthen its response to refugee situations, the Government of Ethiopia has supported its collaboration with a broader array of stakeholders within the context of the CRRF. In connection with this, therefore, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Government, through its refugee agency, the administration for refugee and returnee Affairs (ARRA) are, continuing and taking the key leading role in the collective responses to operationalize the nine pledges and practically apply the CRRF in the country. Ethiopia's continued commitment to the economic integration of refugees can be seen from her revision of the refugee laws and the revision of the nine pledges. Graham & Miller (2021, 87) note that Ethiopia promised to expand its out-of-camp policy, provide work permits to refugees, and facilitate local integration in instances of protracted displacement through the new laws and policies.

By and large, enacting the new Ethiopian refugee law, which included the views of many stakeholders and was ratified by the Parliament in April 2018. It laid a conducive environment for implementing the CRRF goals. The Government of Ethiopia continues to advance the implementation of the CRRF in Ethiopia; the Government remains committed to offering the pledges made at the leader's summit held in New York City in September 2016 and has already realized several achievements. However, it's a huge task that continues to pose challenges.

Carciotto & Ferraro (2020) conclude that some have criticized the NYD, GCR, and CRRF for being nonbinding and just a starting point for regional consultations, meetings, and conferences. Despite that, Carver (2020) insists that there "...will be greater clarity on overall resourcing requirements, and aligning these more closely with mainstream development programming in Ethiopia. CRRF has presented innovative possibilities for greater refugee integration, especially for self-reliance and the possibility of taking employment in the formal sector. Graham & Miller (2021, 6) observe that the deficient government structure and ill-coordination between different stakeholders, including NGOs, donors, and government agencies, has caused the focus to shift from the 'camp-based approach' to the refugee integration-oriented

approach. According to the authors, the strategic vision is missing to apply the CRRF as required. Social accommodation and social adjustment are deficient, which deters confidence-building mechanisms. Most interactions between the refugees and the hosts are predominantly of economic considerations, and social interactions remain negligible; as a result, Vemuru et al. (2020, 163) note that “there is a strong sense of otherness, revealing limited integration.”

### • **Challenges to be addressed**

Ethiopia hosts and administers many refugees from different countries. Up to March 31, 2018, more than 844,589 refugees are found in Ethiopia in 27 camps, including Addis Ababa (UNHCR, 2022). From time to time, the number of refugees has been increasing. The ARRA and the UNHCR register these refugees for further administration and services. By implementing a mutual agreement, the ARRA, and the UNHCR are trying to shoulder responsibilities to improve the refugee situation and for the success of the CRRF. However, there are many challenges, and the major ones, as enumerated by the 2017 ARRA’s Report, consist of the following:

First, on October 27, 2017, the Government enabled civil registration for refugees in Ethiopia. Refugees at a country-wide level can now have their life events included within the national registry, free of charge, including births, deaths, marriage, and divorce. They also receive an official certificate acknowledging the event, which can be used for processes within Ethiopia and abroad, including family reunification, third-country resettlement, and upon repatriation. It is a realization of pledge nine made at the leaders’ summit and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular 16.9. Though reasonable progress has been made in this area, it remains an arduous task and must be sustainable.

Secondly, Ethiopia continues to advance refugee access to education as a priority. It is the objective of the Government that every refugee child will receive the same treatment provided to nationals concerning access to primary education. Every recognized refugee or asylum seeker may also have access to secondary and tertiary education without distinction on any ground, within available resources, and subject to

the education policy of Ethiopia. However, it is challenging due to a shortage of resources.

Thirdly, it should also be mentioned that persons continue to cross the border into Ethiopia from locations affected by conflict and climate change, such as Somalia and South Sudan. Ethiopia maintains an open-door asylum policy and will continue to do so. There is a need to do more to address some of the root causes, including food insecurity in the Horn of Africa region.

Fourth, regarding durable solutions, it is focused on keeping the pledge to expand access to resettlement in third countries and other alternative pathways. There are appreciable recent initiatives, such as facilitating the humanitarian corridor, through which more than 200 refugees have already left for Italy with the help of the diaspora and faith-based organizations. More significant opportunity is possible for the movement through family reunification programs. This area needs to be strengthened and remains a challenge as long as positive responses from receptive countries in the west determine its successes.

Fifth, the Government of Ethiopia also prioritizes safe and accessible reception conditions, ensuring that refugees can access asylum procedures wherever they cross into Ethiopia. The new refugee proclamation will double the days refugees must approach the nearest Government installation upon arrival. It also ensures that refugees have access to information needed to understand the asylum processes in a language appropriate to them.

Sixth, responding to the most vulnerable is also an essential part of the work to be achieved. Identifying those with the most specific needs can be challenging. Refugee communities can help and continue working with them to identify and ensure that assistance is provided to at-risk people. The Ethiopian Government, which has protection staff at each camp and within the urban areas that work closely with communities, must be strengthened in equipment to ensure an effective response.

Seventh, contingency planning is necessary for unexpected events, and mitigating unforeseen situations and this need to plan appropriately became a challenge.

Last but not least, and can be considered a serious challenge, is a financial shortage that hinders the proper treatment of the refugee population. In recent years, the budget allocated for emergency areas where refugee influx is steady and high has declined. Ethiopia is one of the countries that has been receiving refugees frequently, especially since 2013. The South Sudanese refugee influx has experienced underfunding, resulting in a shortage of service delivery followed by low quality and dissatisfaction.

Even though an estimated total of 327.8 million US\$ budget allocated for the Ethiopia refugee operation in 2018, “the total recorded contributions so far amounts only to some US\$ 68.3 million” (ARRA report, 2017), proving once again that the operation is seriously underfunded. The significant consequence of the shortage of budget and funding is illustrated in the low quality of services (per standards and accessibility). It means that the budget allocated for refugees in recent years is creating a massive gap in the quality of services rendered to refugees. It hurts the standards of services to be given to refugees. First, the amount of food distributed to the refugees in kind and amount tended to decrease in recent years. For example, “one refugee used to get 16 kg of wheat, and this amount has declined to 10 kg in the past three years.” (ARRA report, 2017).

Secondly, the problem has also been seen in delivering water for refugees and its standard. “A refugee was supposed to get 21 liters of water per day. Still, nowadays refugees are getting an average of 12 to 17 liters per day” (ARRA report, 2017). In addition to this, it is becoming a grave problem that most of the refugees, especially in newly established camps, don’t have permanent shelters in; and those refugees that are living in temporary shelters are vulnerable to environmental disasters and also face other problems such as gender-based violence and insecurity.

Thirdly, services are also not standardized in education, protection, and livelihoods. “One example could be the Nguenyiel refugee camp, the largest refugee camp in Ethiopia, in which the number of school-aged children exceeds 45,000. In contrast, those who get a chance to attend school are only around 20,000 (ARRA report, 2017).

Generally, the existing shortage of funding is now directly becoming a serious challenge in the Ethiopian refugee operation. These key challenges mainly resulting from underfunding include the inability to respond to complex emergencies, such as the frequency of general food ration cuts and the shortage of other primary and social services. It has also negatively affected availing sustainable livelihood and job opportunities, skills, different types of training, and recreational and social gathering facilities for the refugees. Funds, in turn, need to be increased, especially for the refugees, mainly from Eritrea and Somali youth and children.

## **Recommendations**

The Ethiopian Government and donor agencies successfully attempted to implement the nine pledges of the New York Declaration of 2016. These attempts have to be springboard for further action and have to focus on the following areas specified in the draft Global Compact Refugees document (UNHCR, 2019):

### **• Resettlement**

It is recommended that resettlement options be supported with specific targets and time frames in expanding the number of resettlement countries and available options. There must be a strategy that needs to be developed with wider participation of member states of the UN. Resettlement procedures must be predictable, transparent, and conducted speedily and must be conducted in close collaboration among relevant stakeholders; it must ensure the identification and referral of newly arrived refugees facing acute protection needs.

### **• Durable Solutions**

It is convincing that refugees need to be provided education, skills training, jobs, and livelihood programs to be productive citizens upon their voluntary return or realization of a durable solution. However, refugees' self-reliance should neither increase the burden on host states nor negatively impact their development endeavors. Hence, its commitment of Ethiopia to providing education, health, jobs, and livelihood is not a short-term solution and, as such, needs to match concrete and actionable commitments and support of the international



community. Again, language training, recognition of skills and qualifications, and education and livelihood opportunities for unaccompanied and separated children are essential. Expanding this opportunity and improving basic services is also important, primarily by ensuring access to health, education, and shelter.

Contingency planning and an early warning system that aims to respond effectively to a significant movement of people undoubtedly require building national capacity to conduct sound risk analysis, monitoring, and close coordination with all stakeholders through information exchange and joint planning. It includes situational analysis of the movement of people and evolving political and security situations, as well as scenario-building exercises. It is mandatory to prepare contingency planning requirements that consider environmental impact assessment and mitigation plans to avoid adverse environmental impacts and ensure peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.

- **Registration and documentation**

Concerning registration and documentation, it is crucial to focus on digitalization and national capacity building. Establishing protocols should include not only sharing data but should be in line with data privacy principles. It is also necessary to upgrade the quality of data and install a joint registration system currently used and ensure the sustainability of the standard registration system in the three major areas of agreements between the ARRA and the UNHCR. It is crucial to support the Government in this respect and enhance the existing capacity.

- **Improving camp security**

It is necessary to provide continued material support for the border police to enhance their capacity to combat illegal activities on the border. Protecting refugees, there must be support, including giving vehicles and telecommunication equipment in the border area and other refugee receiving locations. Implementing physical security measures in refugee camps, such as establishing checkpoints, is necessary. Refugees will retain their freedom to leave and reenter the refugee camp in line with international human rights law.

It is also recommended to establish a community policing system in refugee camps. Refugee community members will be involved in a security watch scheme, informing the local police of illegal activities. It will strengthen refugees' relationships with the local community and the police. Enhancing separated restrooms for men and women is also important to limit unnecessary movement and exposure to crime doers. It must be noted that strengthening legal assistance through the increased presence of legal practitioners in refugee camps promotes legal aid to those in need.

#### • **Voluntary return to Eritrea**

There is an excellent opportunity of ensuring peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The prevalence of peace between these countries certainly enables the beginning of the voluntary return of Eritrean refugees to their homes. However, it must be conducted purely voluntarily and following non-refoulment procedures.

#### • **Building national capacity, solving underfunding**

It is highly recommended that the capacity of the ARRA and the steering committee be strengthened as it leads to the proper handling of refugees. The CRRF's early achievements cannot be permanent as long as there is a vast resource deficit. The international community must keep its pledge to plug the gap in resources. In this regard, training the refugee community and teachers in child protection and support areas is essential.

#### • **Strengthening the coordination of the CRRF steering community**

It is fortunate to have a steering committee to coordinate the leading role of the CRRF. The committee comprising the ARRA, the UNHCR, and big nation embassies residing in Addis Ababa has played a notable role till now. Further financing or cementing the early successes is needed to train them to keep their energetic participation and contribution.

#### • **Strengthening Regional cooperation**

Though not enough, IGAD has tried to play an active role in achieving the CRRF goals, i.e., the nine pledges Ethiopia keeps to date. Because refugees in Ethiopia come from IGAD member countries, the regional

organization's role must be strengthened in ensuring a consistent regional approach.

- **Engaging communities**

It is important to cement the relations of the local communities with the refugees. There must be assessments focused on the need of the refugee populations and involving them in decision-making in their livelihoods and ways to improve them. It is also important to engage the tribal leaders near the refugee camps to continue their support in improving the refugees' livelihood.

## **Conclusion**

Ethiopia has shown an encouraging and constructive trend to apply and provide sustainable solutions for the economic and social integration of the refugees and displaced persons with the host community. Self-reliance and integration of the refugees were the two primary goals of the CRRF. These were required not for the benefit of only refugees, but Ethiopia also accepted the economic betterment of the country by working towards these. Gains are enormous, and Ethiopian Government's pledge is sustaining the momentum. But there are several impediments to this continuity. The local governments have been recognized as service providers in the refugee areas, but they are not effectively involved in planning and implementation for the sharing of resources. This is delaying the on-going processes. Ethnic and regional diversities are slackening the pace of progress. The recent unprecedented situations like Covid-19 and Ukraine-Russia war have put more pressure on already strained resources. The deficit funds need to be generated so as to provide satisfactory services. The positive constructive vision of Ethiopia and its realizable legal framework is generating hope for both the refugees and the hosts. Policies and frameworks are in place but implementation needs to be strengthened and reinforced for congenial accommodation of the hosts and the refugees.

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