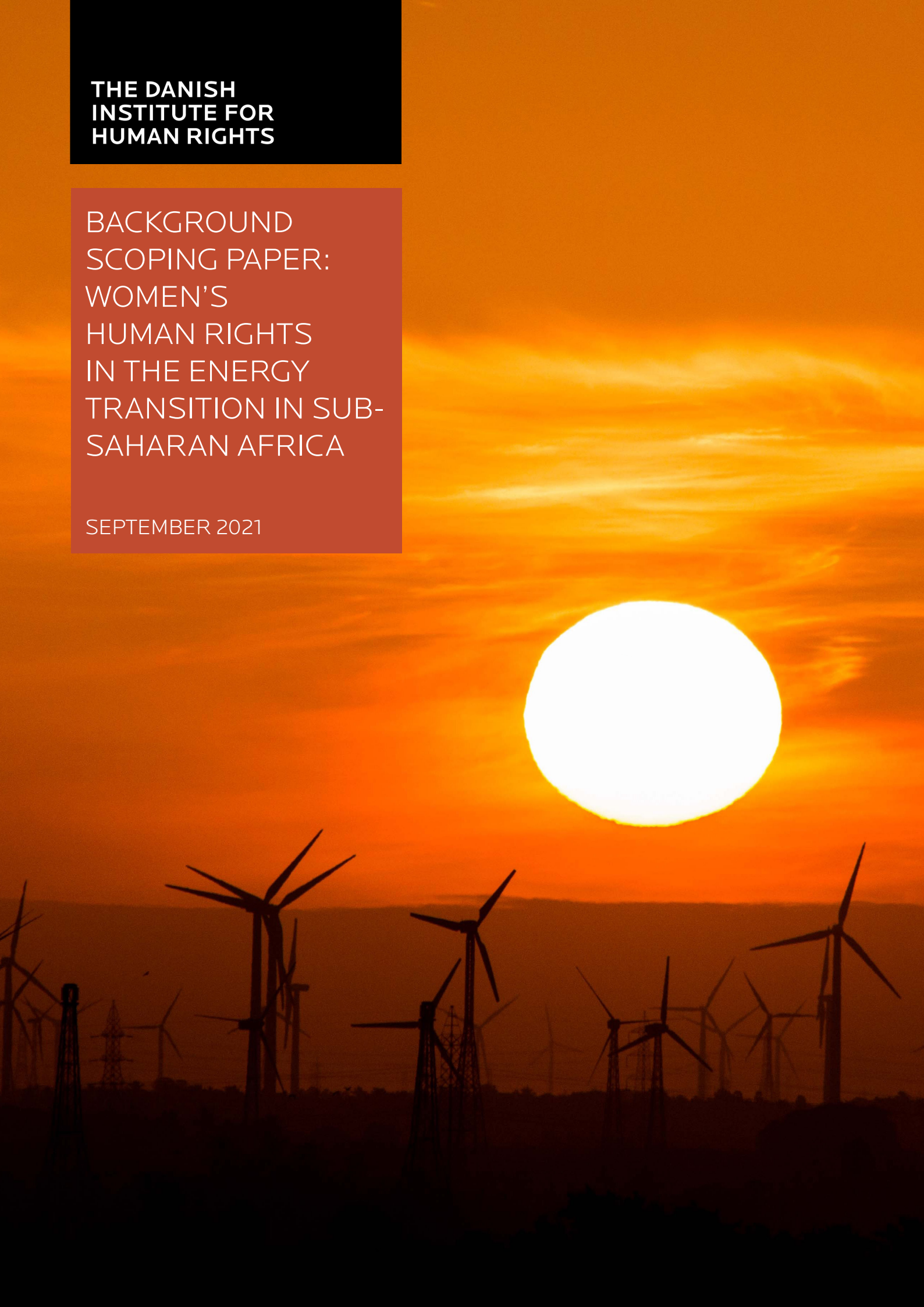


**THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**

BACKGROUND
SCOPING PAPER:
WOMEN'S
HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THE ENERGY
TRANSITION IN SUB-
SAHARAN AFRICA

SEPTEMBER 2021



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You can read more about the DIHR's work on gender in the context of business and human rights here: <https://www.humanrights.dk/projects/gender-business-human-rights>

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OVERVIEW

This background scoping paper provides a preliminary overview of some of the gendered human rights impacts related to the energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa. It seeks to provide a resource for stakeholder engagement and discussion – including a virtual roundtable on the rights of women and girls in the energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa, held in October 2021 – in working towards a gender-responsive approach to the energy transition that is respectful and supportive of human rights, in particular with a view to increasing attention to the rights of women and girls. As such, the briefing does not constitute a comprehensive analysis.

- Part I provides a general introduction to the energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa and its capacity to impact women and girls.
- Part II explores select gendered impacts, challenges and opportunities associated with the energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Annex 1 provides an overview of select stakeholders and initiatives which are working to tackle gender inequalities in the energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa

1 PART I: INTRODUCTION

While Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the lowest energy access rates in the world,¹ the transition to renewable energy in Africa has been increasing over the last decade, with many countries in the region working to increase renewable energy capacity in recent years.² Frequently, the energy transition is positioned by various stakeholders as 'inherently good' due to the potential contribution of the green transition to mitigating climate change and enhancing energy access. As a result of this, the energy transition often does not fall under scrutiny. This, however, ignores evidence that renewable energy projects have been documented to cause adverse human rights impacts and harms, as well as indications that the regulatory and due diligence frameworks that govern renewable energy projects are frequently under-developed, including when compared to more established energy sectors.

Taking a closer look at energy transition dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa, it becomes evident that the full range of actual and potential human rights impacts are at play. Furthermore, while it has been noted that women and girls frequently bear a disproportionate burden of the adverse impacts associated with energy projects and are less likely to share in the benefits, this acknowledgment has not translated into consistent gender responsiveness in the development and implementation of such projects.³ For example, women and men provide and consume energy in different ways, which may render women disproportionately affected by energy issues; women frequently have less access to energy; women workers may be underrepresented in the green energy sector; women are largely absent in decision-making positions responsible for designing national clean energy strategies; and women may be subject to potential human rights abuses associated with renewable energy projects.⁴

Consequently, if attention is not given to gender inequalities and dynamics, the transition into green energy solutions could maintain, or even increase, rather than diminish gender inequalities, or create new inequalities, and its subsequent socio-economic, environmental and financial repercussions.⁵ Taking an intersectional lens, this scoping paper therefore provides a preliminary exploration of the gendered nature of these impacts, with a particular focus on the rights of women and girls, with a view to identifying key gender issues and entry points for how energy transition governance can become more gender responsive.

This is of increasing importance, as the renewable energy sector is growing in size, including in Sub-Saharan Africa, as noted above. Ensuring equal opportunities across all genders and backgrounds, to benefit from and have access to affordable and reliable energy, therefore need to be high priorities, as is also noted in the sustainable development goals (SDGs).⁶

GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT TERMS

GENDER: Social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men.⁷

GENDER BLINDNESS: Failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts.⁸

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: Systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in policies and actions.⁹

GENDER RESPONSIVE: Gender responsiveness refers to processes and outcomes that reflect an understanding of gender roles and inequalities and which make an effort to encourage equal participation and equal and fair distribution of benefits.¹⁰

INTERSECTIONALITY: An approach for understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/ identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.¹¹

2 PART II: GENDERED IMPACTS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

According to the joint annual report from the custodian agencies of SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), 'Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for three-quarters of the global population without access [to electricity]¹² which is why the focus on improving access to sustainable and affordable energy in this region is so important. Additionally, access to clean energy is essential in order to fulfil basic human rights, such as access to clean water, sanitation and health care,¹³ as well as contributing to alleviate poverty, improve peoples' well-being and develop the economy.¹⁴

Although women are considered primary users of energy, particularly given the burden of care work imposed on them, they make up 70% of the people living in poverty, many of whom live in female-headed households in rural areas in most of the world.¹⁵ Women often have less of a voice in local, regional and international decision-making processes and policy formation than men, making them (especially female-headed households) especially exposed to extreme energy poverty.¹⁶

Furthermore, unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender-related issues around participation and access to energy for women, particularly as it led to an increase in unpaid care work, which was disproportionately shouldered by women.¹⁷ However, women leaders in the energy sector have simultaneously expressed that it presents a unique opportunity to integrate solutions to close the gender gap into national recovery strategies.¹⁸

The following sections will focus on select illustrative issues that emerge when applying an intersectional gender lens to the renewable energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa, and consider how these issues might be tackled in developing and implementing renewable energy governance frameworks and projects that protect and respect the human rights of women and girls.

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO ENERGY

When applying a gender lens to the renewable energy sector, it is important to acknowledge the inequalities of access to energy between women and men. 'Access' not only refers to the use of energy but also to the participation and power hierarchies in the sector itself.¹⁹ According to research conducted by the European Commission, 'female-headed households are more likely to be poorer',²⁰ making them disproportionately affected by the lack of access to energy, indicating that women are overall more affected by energy poverty than men.²¹

In the Sub-Saharan context, women may be more reliant on energy for the following reasons: women frequently spend more time at home than men, rendering them more reliant on heating;²² women walk longer distances for the gathering of energy sources, such as water, biomass²³ and firewood; they spend more household money for dangerous and inefficient energy sources for lighting; babies are often delivered in the dark; health risks are increased, due to working in polluted households; and greater safety risks occur due to inadequate lighting at night, increasing exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).²⁴

Multiple studies have highlighted that improved access to renewable energy sources for women is not only linked to health improvements, but also better opportunities to finish primary education, better connectivity due to more access to internet and mobile phones, increased salary and also the reduction of SGBV (which will be elaborated on below).²⁵

The African Development Bank Group also underlines that improving women's access to energy combats time poverty.²⁶ Ensuring that women do not have to spend as much time walking long distances to gather energy sources (e.g. it is estimated that the time spent to collect firewood can come up to 100 hours per year²⁷) may enable them to have more time 'for the pursuit of education, income-generation, civic involvement, or leisure opportunities.'²⁸

In South Africa, a study conducted on the effects of rural electrification indicated a rise in female employment in electrified communities by 9.5%, while male employment rates remained relatively the same. A possible explanation for this could be that women were released from many of their home-bound duties which took up a lot of time – due to the lack of access to electricity.²⁹

Finally, according to a global survey by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), cultural and social norms as well as a lack of skills and training were noted as a common barrier that women faced in accessing energy. Moreover, 'the lack of gender-sensitive policies, ... and inequity in ownership of assets, ... security and the remoteness of field locations' were part of hindering women from accessing energy.³⁰

Actors in the energy transition could contribute to addressing problems of unequal access to renewable energy by, for example, designing policies and providing trainings tailored to addressing the barriers women experience.³¹ By mainstreaming gender across sectors at the energy access level, gaps and opportunities will become identifiable, making it easier to find solutions on how to handle them.³²

WOMEN WORKERS

A survey conducted by IRENA found that currently 32% of the employees in the renewable energy sector are women.³³ Although this is higher than 22% representation in the oil and gas sector, the study found that most of the women in the renewable energy sector are employed in administrative jobs, rather than in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) positions. While little

research or evidence exists regarding women's participation in the renewable energy sector within the specific regional context of Sub-Saharan Africa, actors such as the International Finance Corporation cite the above statistic as a key area of concern for Sub-Saharan Africa.³⁴ In addition, several networking initiatives exist within Sub-Saharan Africa with the express purpose of fostering women's participation in the renewable energy sector.³⁵

According to several sources, the energy sector (including renewable energy) remains largely gender blind. This is exacerbated by the fact that 'comprehensive gender-disaggregated data is currently not available for the energy sector as a whole or for subsectors, including ... renewables',³⁶ which can be problematic when it comes to identifying disparities and forming solutions to close gender gaps, such as designing policies, since 'what is measured is most likely to be addressed.'³⁷

The underrepresentation of women in the sector is exacerbated by the lack of access to support networks, role models and champions supporting in promoting their career paths, as well as the insufficient implementation of female-friendly and family-friendly public and company policies.³⁸ Research has also indicated that the large underrepresentation of women at decision-making levels prevents more gender-inclusive policies from being developed and implemented.³⁹

Moreover, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) 2020 renewable energy benchmarking found that only two of the 16 companies assessed reported to have closed the gender wage gap and none of the companies committed to or achieved gender balance at the executive level or across the company.⁴⁰

Specifically, in the energy sector, it has been observed that women's leadership increases 'pro-environmental corporate actions, profitability, and improves inclusive decision-making and cross-sector collaboration, all critical for last-mile energy distribution and achieving SDG7.'⁴¹

In light of this, closing the gender gap across all levels of organisations is extremely important, not only in a human rights context, but also in a socio-economic context, as it could have the impact of providing women with better access to energy. Additionally, improving the collection of gender-relevant data in governments, companies and projects will also help tackling issues at their cores by enabling actors to identify and act on gender-relevant issues.

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Some of the most significant inequalities between women and men within the renewable energy sector can be observed at decision-making levels. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only four out of 56 (7%) positions of lead energy sector ministers are women.⁴² As energy consumers and producers, women are often disproportionately affected by decisions regarding regional, national and international energy policies and strategies⁴³ and it would therefore be prudent for gender to be mainstreamed throughout the energy sector, particularly at the leadership level.

While scant research exists on women in decision-making in the context of the energy transition in Sub-Saharan Africa specifically, globally, at the management level, women are underrepresented, hardly making up 8% of senior management positions 'in the wind industry, while in the overall renewable energy sector, men represent at least three-quarters of directors in close to half of all the participating firms.'⁴⁴ Gender wage gaps at executive levels are striking, perpetuating the systematic discrimination against women.⁴⁵

Excluding women from participating means failing to integrate valuable input regarding inclusive and responsive policies, and can lead to a lack of female advocates tackling inequalities and barriers which in turn prevents the equal access to, use of and control over renewable energy.⁴⁶ Addressing these needs at the decision-making level has proved to positively affect the health and well-being of entire communities, resulting in the reduction of time-poverty, enabling women to focus more on education and income-generating activities, granting more independence and security.⁴⁷

Regarding the global environmental situation resulting from climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, evidence has demonstrated that when women engage in decision-making, as well as participate in the renewable energy sector, 'energy and water policies are more effective, utility products in those sectors have higher sales rates and yield higher returns on equity and investment.'⁴⁸ Similarly, females in decision-making positions are more likely to halve carbon dioxide emissions as well as 'set aside protected land areas'.⁴⁹ While women's participation should not be instrumentalised, such evidence presents additional impetus for working towards gender parity in decision-making in the renewable energy sector.

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Research has shown that SGBV can be exacerbated or caused as a consequence of lack of access to reliable energy sources, but also result from a male-dominated workforce and insufficient infrastructures on rural construction sites.⁵⁰

In addition to the above-mentioned impacts associated with women being disproportionately affected by energy poverty, increased access to reliable energy can also contribute increased security and can serve as an important step towards greater safety. As a starting point, women that are required to travel during non-daylight hours feel safer when public pathways are illuminated.⁵¹ Furthermore, education (which increases due to the reduction of time poverty), as well as access to information (e.g. by accessing the internet from their mobile phone) increases the recognition of women's rights among all parties and provides women with a 'greater assurance of what is acceptable or not'.⁵²

An eminent effect that has surfaced in large-scale infrastructure projects in the renewable energy sector is the increased risk of SGBV.⁵³ While it is possible that such consequences could be overlooked due to the nature of the subject frequently

being taboo in the communities it affects, an increase in SGBV can be observed, for example, when a project site in a remote area disproportionately urbanises in contrast to the infrastructures installed. Under such conditions it is not unusual that 'sociocultural disadvantages or barriers ... can be exacerbated,'⁵⁴ which could have the impact of exposing women to risks of SGBV. Additionally, due to the influx of employment-seeking male workers, prostitution, sex work, drugs, alcohol and violence can be inadvertent repercussions of renewables projects in such areas.⁵⁵

One example of such repercussions occurring took place in 2016 in Kenya in conjunction with the Lake Turkana Wind Power (LTWP) project. The LTWP was Kenya's largest private investment and, due to promising job opportunities associated with the project, a rapid influx of male migrants from all over Kenya occurred. This led to problems, such as alcoholism, prostitution and violence against local women, among other issues.⁵⁶

Without a comprehensive infrastructure plan – including sufficient health care provisions, as well as policies preventing sexual harassment – the safety of women at and around such project sites can be largely compromised. The lack of such precautions can cause women to turn down a well-paid job offer and could have the impact of maintaining a gender-imbalanced workforce in the renewable energy sector. In the alternative, implementing such measures and ensuring a safe work environment for women can be more attractive for a female workforce, promoting gender equality.⁵⁷

As SGBV-related vulnerabilities in the renewable energy sector have intensified due to the Covid-19 pandemic, governments and businesses would do well to take the opportunity to include SGBV mitigation policies and actions in their recovery packages.⁵⁸

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

In recent years, scholars have increasingly applied an intersectional lens to their analysis of gender impacts, enabling the analysis of how gender inequalities interact with other identity factors, such as indigeneity.⁵⁹

Research has shown that some renewable energy projects have disproportionately impacted indigenous peoples living close to project sites, forcing the indigenous populations to 'concede to broader environmental concerns.'⁶⁰ Some significant impacts that the development of large-scale renewable energy projects could have on indigenous communities include the loss of livelihood and food security through displacing populations and/or restricting land access.⁶¹

Adverse living conditions resulting from population displacement or land loss – and its connected repercussions – change 'the social fabric of a community, including its power relations and gender norms.'⁶² Inter alia, indigenous communities can be affected by gradually disappearing traditions and traditional livelihoods; the resettlement to uncultivable lands can consequently lead to an increase in

unauthorised labour activities or informal wage labour;⁶³ women become less independent, due to men finding work more easily during such a transition to a market economy.⁶⁴

In sum, it is of great importance to consider indigenous peoples as salient stakeholders to engage with when it comes to land acquisition or leases for large-scale renewable energy projects.⁶⁵ Applying an intersectional gender lens shows that alternately, hierarchies and societal structures in affected communities can exacerbate the vulnerability of women and deepen underlying gender inequalities.

As an example of the impacts that renewable energy projects can have on indigenous populations, in 2014, residents from Laisamis Constituency and Karare Ward (the communities impacted by the LTWP project, described above) filed a lawsuit against the project as well as the county government, the National Government and the National Land Commission for illegal land acquisition.⁶⁶ LTWP claimed that it recognised the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), but believed that the groups affected by the project are not indigenous and therefore FPIC was not necessary.⁶⁷

Another project which had problematic outcomes due to the resettlement of indigenous communities to make space for renewable energy sources is the Olkaria Geothermal Project. In addition to above-mentioned issues, the local Maasai community also noticed an increase in skin diseases, stillbirths in cattle and premature delivery.⁶⁸

The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre renewable energy benchmarking, mentioned above, found that one out of 16 companies has policies in place that respect indigenous peoples' rights in line with international standards and none of the companies have adopted any of the necessary policies regarding respect for land rights. Furthermore, 'allegations of abuse of land rights are among the most frequently reported abuses in the renewable energy sector (not surprising given its large land footprint), yet none of the 16 companies scored any points in this theme.'⁶⁹

These cases exemplify the urgent need for all parties involved in the energy transition to protect and respect indigenous peoples' rights and value indigenous peoples as important stakeholders, including to avoid entrenching gender inequalities.

ACCESS TO REMEDY

As acknowledged in the Gender Guidance to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 'Women experience adverse impacts of business activities differently and disproportionately. They may also face additional barriers in seeking access to effective remedies.'⁷⁰ The Gender Guidance further acknowledges that 'Women affected adversely by business activities face additional barriers in seeking access to effective remedies' going on to note that 'Even if affected women are able to access certain judicial, non-judicial or operational-level mechanisms, they are unable to enforce suitable remedies, because these remedial mechanisms

typically adopt gender-neutral processes or, worse, operate within existing patriarchal norms.⁷¹ It is therefore imperative for women in Sub-Saharan Africa to be able to access effective remedies for any adverse impacts or harms associated with renewable energy projects and that such mechanisms include a strong gender focus.

Unfortunately, according to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, at present, companies operating in the renewable energy sector have not managed to provide sufficient grievance mechanisms in order to prevent, address or mitigate human rights abuses that are a consequence of their operations. The benchmarking highlighted that only 18 out of 59 companies have external grievance mechanisms in place allowing communities to file a complaint and did not include detailed information on the gender dimension of such mechanisms.⁷²

There are, however, institutions within Sub-Saharan Africa that facilitate access to remedy for impacted parties and that can contribute to women impacted by renewable energy projects being able to access effective remedy.

For example, in Kenya, the National Gender and Equality Commission, which was established by the National Gender and Equality Commission Act 2011, focusses on monitoring and investigating gender-related issues, as well as mainstreaming gender into different sectors of the country. Among other things, the Commission is integral to promoting the rights and voices of communities affected by renewable energy projects. The Commission highlighted, for instance, the need to '[e]nhance participation and inclusion of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in [the] development agenda with a focus to empowerment funds, social protection and uptake of green clean energy'.⁷³ Although the Commission can 'investigate on its own initiative or on the basis of complaints, any matter in respect of any violations of the principle of equality and freedom from discrimination and make recommendations for the improvement of the functioning of the institutions concerned'⁷⁴ Article 30 of the Act explicitly states that complaints against international organisations cannot be handled due to their transnational character.⁷⁵

As another example, the Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) has announced plans to set up a special unit to address public concerns during the design and execution of its projects. The team will monitor rollout of all KenGen initiatives and handle grievances as the power generator moves to cut the cost of implementing solar, geothermal and wind projects.⁷⁶

Similarly, Tanzania's Electric Supply Company Ltd (TANESCO), has a legal branch business unit to hold the company accountable by ensuring that it complies with national and institutional principles of good governance.⁷⁷ The company also has a complaint structure which is available on its website.⁷⁸ However, TANESCO has been criticised for its lengthy response times to customers.⁷⁹ According to another study, nearly 73% of respondents graded the level of TANESCO's customer service as low or very low.⁸⁰

Access to remedy is a key tenet of minimising the negative impacts that businesses may have on human rights, and must be ensured in all contexts, particularly one as impactful as the energy transition. While several endeavours exist within the Sub-Saharan African region, persistent barriers to access to judicial remedy combined with the lack of sufficient grievance mechanisms within renewable energy companies, as demonstrated by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre benchmarking, presents a serious barrier to the prevention of human rights risks, which have a disproportionate impact on women and girls.

NATIONAL POLICIES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Integrating gender concerns into national policies is receiving increased momentum. This is of particular importance, as gender-blind policies do not account for the disproportional affect they have on women, especially in the renewable energy sector.⁸¹ In order to achieve more gender equality in policy-making, USAID identifies several strategies designed for energy regulators to include a gender dimension in their policies. As mentioned above, there is a lack of gender-disaggregated data, therefore one of the strategy suggestions is to collect more, in order to understand the gaps and design specific policies tailored to these gaps.⁸²

Another strategy could be to link gender policies and the energy sector, taking the development of the regional framework by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as an example, namely the Directive on Gender Assessment in Energy Projects.⁸³ This framework is designed to ensure that ECOWAS Member States mainstream gender into their national energy projects by: taking into account women as valuable stakeholders; preventing negative impacts early on with precautionary measures or mitigating such risks where necessary; and improving transparency in the planning and implementation process of energy projects.⁸⁴

The World Bank has published a practical handbook on how to mainstream gender into energy projects.⁸⁵ Among others, examples include 'The Kenya National Domestic Biogas Programme' which makes clear references to gender issues and sets concrete gender-disaggregated and quantifiable targets. Such tools can help to map, understand and assess mainstreaming gender into energy projects.⁸⁶

The International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA) has performed several gender audits with their network members, in order to ensure that gender is properly mainstreamed into energy policies. After performing these gender audits, ENERGIA produced a gender audit tool to identify and analyse the most relevant factors that hinder efforts to mainstream gender in energy policy.⁸⁷ The tool provides valuable guidance on how to systematically mainstream gender into energy projects.

A study has drawn on ENERGIA gender audits and assessed their effectiveness, concluding that revised national policies included many gender issues, such as the Kenyan Energy Policy 2011, compared to 2004, as well as the Senegalese Renewable Energy Policy, which included women as a target group, a direct consequence of the

Minister for Renewable Energy having been a member of the gender audit team.⁸⁸ While the audits were also criticised for focusing too much on policy gaps, rather than supporting countries in creating gender-aware energy policies,⁸⁹ such strategies can make an important contribution to mainstreaming gender in the energy transition.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has described the Sub-Saharan Africa region as leaders of integrating gender into their national energy frameworks,⁹⁰ but also suggests that countries should 'develop gender action plans specific to their energy sector policies, include clear targets and objectives, and elaborate on the steps a country can take – such as including gender-budgeting, identifying gender indicators to track progress, establish gender focal points within the Ministries of Energy or liaise with Ministries of Women Affairs and women's organizations – to ensure gender mainstreaming is tangible in a country's energy work.'⁹¹

BENEFIT SHARING

Benefit sharing involves sharing the rewards of renewable energy development with local communities. It aims to integrate a development in the local community by contributing to the future vitality and success of the region. It is based on a desire to establish and maintain positive long-term connections to the area.⁹² Monetary benefit sharing encompasses taxation, payments into development funds⁹³ and compensations,⁹⁴ whereas non-monetary benefit sharing connotes direct contributions to community developments, such as 'improvements to infrastructure and social services, reduction of electricity prices, creation of a community fund and shared ownership of the renewable energy farm.'⁹⁵

Little research has been conducted specifically regarding the implications of gender in benefit sharing of renewable energy projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. In some Sub-Saharan countries, women comprise more than half of the smallholder farmers.⁹⁶ In situations where men are in charge of the land and head of the house, they receive and manage compensation payments from renewable energy projects, and may not consult women on how the funds should be spent.⁹⁷ Similarly, women are often deprived of non-monetary benefit sharing due to low participation rates in consultation meetings, as well as a low female presence in decision-making positions.⁹⁸

In its report of a two-year study interviewing workers and businesses of the mining sector globally, the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRМ) found that women generally benefitted less from agreements in energy projects than men: the benefits for men tended to include employment, business development and control over 'compensation monies and other "rents" that flowed from companies to communities.'⁹⁹ However, CSRМ noted that when women participated in the creation of agreements, there followed a development of institutional capacity, and triggered 'subsequent involvement in community decision-making more broadly, even in areas where women had not previously been active.'¹⁰⁰ In addition, the adoption of such agreements involving women led to the inclusion of gender-specific provisions such as employment quotas, training programmes, cultural and environmental monitoring as well as family and health-related projects.¹⁰¹

It is therefore crucial that women are represented during consultation processes in order to identify specific needs. In the past these needs have been specifically related to 'education, health and finance'¹⁰² and further 'household care and maintenance, their productive activities and other needs of the community, as well as to ascertain how women expect to be affected by the project.'¹⁰³

CONCLUSION

As illustrated throughout this background scoping paper, while crucial to the sustainability of the planet and the protection of people, the energy transition can also present serious human rights challenges and impacts, particularly on women and girls. While initiatives related to mainstreaming gender and maintaining human rights standards within the energy transition are beginning to flourish, there is still a need for increased attention to human rights throughout the transition, particularly from a gender lens perspective. We hope that the cursory information presented in this paper can contribute to further research and dialogue towards developing a more cohesive picture of the current status of human rights within the energy transition, particularly as relates to the rights of women and girls, as well as gender relations.

3 ANNEX 1: STAKEHOLDERS AND INITIATIVES

To promote gender equality in the global energy transition movement, women must be recognised as valuable stakeholders. Various civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and networks have already set the scene and engaged in tackling these inequalities using various strategies. Select stakeholders and initiatives include the below.

AFRICAN WOMEN IN ENERGY AND POWER (AWEAP)

AWEaP directly addresses the way gender inequalities expose women to energy poverty more than men. This issue goes hand in hand with how women are the most affected stakeholders but do not get enough voice in the energy sector, which also explains the lack of role models and champions in the sector. AWEaP engages with these problems at the core with eradicating energy poverty as its top priority by creating female entrepreneurs, ambassadors and role models with a multi-stakeholder driven initiative.¹⁰⁴

AFRICAN WOMEN IN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (AWEDI)

According to a global survey conducted by IRENA, lack of skills and training were identified as one of the most common barriers in Africa to female participation in the renewable energy sector.¹⁰⁵ AWEDI addresses this issue by supporting women across the value chain in the male dominated energy sector, providing them with the required knowledge and skill sets to gain more confidence.¹⁰⁶

ENERGY2EQUAL INITIATIVE BY THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION (IFC)

Energy2Equal is an initiative launched by International Finance Corporation (IFC) in partnership with the Government of Canada. By partnering with global renewable energy actors, IFC oversees and ensures female representation in these private businesses in leadership, as well as throughout their entire value chains, enhancing female participation in the renewable energy sector. 'The goal: help the leading renewable energy players in Sub-Saharan Africa to power the next generation of female renewable energy leaders. Among the participating companies: Baobab+, Bujagali Energy Limited, Elle Solaire, ENGIE PowerCorner, Greenlight Planet, Inyenyeri, Lekela, Pawame, PEG Africa and Schneider Electric.'¹⁰⁷

ETHIOPIAN WOMEN IN ENERGY (EWIEN)

EWiEn is an association that connects and empowers Ethiopian women working in the energy sector with the aim of promoting greater visibility, networking opportunities, mentoring and professional connections between its members.¹⁰⁸

GLOBAL WOMEN'S NETWORK FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION (GWNET)

GWNET is an international non-profit organisation that connects women in the global renewable energy sector to network, advocate and mentor in order to fight gender inequality in the male-dominated sector.¹⁰⁹

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY (ENERGIA)

ENERGIA is an international network that supports female-headed micro-businesses, helps to mainstream gender into policies and frameworks, as well as raise issues based on evidence to help prevent and tackle the existing gender inequalities in the renewable energy sector.¹¹⁰

SOLAR SISTER

Solar Sister is a social enterprise that focusses on enabling access to renewable energy sources for women living in rural Africa by providing trainings and supporting female entrepreneurs to build sustainable enterprises.¹¹¹

TANZANIAN WOMEN IN ENERGY NETWORK (TAWOE)

Tackling the underrepresentation of women in management and top decision-making positions, TaWoe focusses on developing 'a sustainable energy sector through promotion, coordination, research and education.'¹¹²

THE WOMEN IN ENERGY NETWORK

Enlit Africa is a community of people representing businesses in the renewable energy sector that comes together for events to exchange innovative ideas and support one another.¹¹³ From this, The Women in Energy Network emerged, which hosts events that take up subjects around the inequality of women in the African energy sector, as well as taking up current subjects, such as the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic in this context.¹¹⁴

WOMEN IN AFRICAN POWER NETWORK (WIAP) – USAID

'Power Africa is a U.S. Government-led partnership, coordinated by USAID, that brings together the collective resources of over 170 public and private sector partners to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa.'¹¹⁵ Their WiAP network connects women working in the energy sector and promotes gender equality in the renewable energy sector by providing a space for women to participate in the global dialogue around energy issues. WiAP tackles several issues mentioned above, particularly the lack of support networks, as well as the lack of women in decision-making.¹¹⁶

ENDNOTES

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