

## Denan IDP Camp – “1 Birr per Bundle” (11.7 cents US)



Photo by James Murren, Project Gaia

**B**undles of wood neatly laid out for sale at Denan Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp near Denan Town in Gode Region of Ethiopia Somali Regional State. The price is high in a community where purchasing power is very low.

The people of both town and camp rely on biomass for their household energy needs and the environment is extremely denuded and degraded. Fuel wood collection times for women can be as long as 12 hours and injuries during collection and preparation (cutting down to size) are common. Health impacts of burning biomass indoors are apparent, with the doctor who visits the local clinic reporting numerous cases of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Acute Lower Respiratory Infections (Fiona Lambe).

The consequences of stripping biomass in this arid region are severe and immediate. Loss of habitat leads to extinction of species and forced exodus of indigenous peoples dependent upon resources for survival. The environmental degradation from land clearance for firewood is especially acute around the IDP camps. Denan Camp numbers 8000 people. Many collect firewood for cooking and income generation. The indigenous “Youb” tree in Somali State’s Warder Area is but one of many plant species threatened with extinction (OWDA).

The Gaia Association and Ogaden Welfare & Development Association (OWDA), with a grant from the Shell Foundation, are testing 50 ethanol-fueled stoves in Denan town with ethanol manufactured in Ethiopia. Stoves may also go to the IDP camp; however, at the commencement of the study, the immediate need in the camp was for food to reverse severe malnutrition among camp residents.