

The Sovereignty of Bangladesh has to be upheld in Cox's Bazar

Participation of local NGO and Local Government must be ensured



- 1. Background:** The presence of over 1.3 million Rohingya in Cox's Bazar is considered one of the largest and most protracted humanitarian crises in the world. Since the beginning of this crisis in 2017, local communities and local organizations have been the first responders. Since then, local, national and international NGOs, and UN agencies have been playing a very important role in providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya. But many problems are becoming more apparent day by day, which need very urgent to solve.
- 2. Restore 300 Acres of cultivated land:** Around 300 Acres of agricultural land adjacent to the Rohingya camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf have reportedly been severely damaged due to the waste from the camps. Despite the scale of humanitarian investment, there has been little visible effort to restore this land or prioritize sustainable waste management systems that could protect local livelihoods and strengthen food security. This is particularly alarming because Cox's Bazar district is the second most district in terms of food security and hunger indicators. The district's economy and survival largely depend on forests, agriculture, rice cultivation, and salt production. We must ensure the sustainable natural resource management for the future generations in Cox's Bazar.
- 3. Reduce dependency on underground water:** Approximately 5-10% tube well either dry or produce saline water especially in Ukhiya. Around 2 Crore and 60 Lakh liters of underground water is extracting daily in Ukhiya and Teknaf for Rohingya refugees. But CCNF is continuously urging for treating of Naf river water instead of underground water extraction. We have to create alternative water source and inject water underground through excavating ponds.
- 4. Ensure Border Security:** We have seen border security is so vulnerable in Cox's Bazar. Many people died in last couples of years. Local people and NGOs in Cox's Bazar have long urged the need for a strong border security force to ensure the protection of local people. The government should ensure border security by developing the capacity of the Bangladesh Army and the BGB, deploying sufficient border forces and fencing in the border and strong naval vigilance in the Naf river.
- 6. Permanent Shelter Construction Decision must be consulted with local government and political leaders:** It is the inevitable rights of local people regarding the land and DC, RRRC, Forest Department, UP and Local government should be consulted for the decision. We hardly see any permanent structure in any of the Refugee Crisis Management Operation in worldwide. But in Rohingya Response we are seeing permanent structures are started to build. We believing this could create a negative example to the overall humanitarian crisis management and it will establish a trend be permanent in the hosting country. And it will make reluctancy the country who is responsible for Refugee crisis. Recently, the Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, visited camps, may be have had took decision on Rohingya shelter construction in Cox's Bazar. Only limited UN, INGOs and NGOs were allowed to participate in that discussion. There was no scope of participation of local NGOs, CSOs, CCNF representative and local government representatives in that meeting. Moreover, the materials using for constructing the shelters are not environment friendly (plastic triple) and other materials are permanent types and there is no disclosure for such construction, and its disposal. This is construction Company namely Infinix based in UAE? No discussion with RRRC, Forest Department and local government regarding this shelter decision. Is that a security threat for Bangladesh?
- 7. UN OCHA Funding why not directly for LOCAL NGOs :** We really appreciate the efforts of UN agencies to make sure funding. They have that capacity and expertise for fund raising. Recently UN OCHA has allocated 150 Million USD from US Government in the Rohingya Humanitarian Response. Out of this amount, 92% fund goes to UN agencies and 8% to INGOs, no direct fund to local NGOs which is against their localization commitment. We respectfully urge to donor to fund directly to local NGOs. We have found that, about this funding there is no open bidding process or any information disclosure about the funding process. It is merely showing the transparency and accountability.

- 8. Pooled Fund Should transparent and competitive and be for Local NGOs:** BRAC has been managing a Pooled Fund for local organizations in Rohingya response. But the limited number of Pooled Fund partners from local NGOs but most of Pooled fund partner are National NGOs who are not from Cox's Bazar district. As this fund is only for local NGOs, we have found that, among the fund receiver only 22% are local NGOs (6 local NGOs) and 78% are national NGOs (21 NGOs). This Pooled Fund should be managed by local NGOs consortium.
- 9. Questioning the impact of Pooled Fund:** This Pooled fund invested huge amount of fund for organizational capacity strengthening, especially in organizing training and workshop, that money assuming around 40 to 50 % has gone to BRAC. But so far, any of the local NGOs do not take any responsibility any of sector/cluster. CCNF and local NGO believe that capacity building initiatives were considered rightly. What is the effectiveness and result of their capacity building initiative? Currently in the response, 117 NGOs working. Among them 8-9 UN agencies, 50-55 INGOs and 8-10 NGOs that are local and rest are from different part of the country. Our urge is to engage more local NGOs. As a part of localization commitment, local NGOs must be capacitated through funding and skills transfer.
- 10. No direct implementation by UN agencies and INGOS:** UN agencies and INGOs has fund raising capacity, technical expertise and monitoring system. But instead of supporting local NGOs, some of the UN agencies (IOM, UNHCR) and INGOs (Tdh, Action Aid, Acted) are directly implementing projects in Rohingya camps. We know their management and operation cost is very high that the cost of local NGOs. We urge UN agencies and INGOs should implement the project in partnership with local NGOs and their role will be funding raising, provide technical knowledge and monitoring of local NGOs. UN can not go for direct implementation.
- 11. UN agencies should have been accountable to District Administration and Local government too:** Since the beginning, UN agencies are not accountable to local or district level administration. But it should be. We have seen it Indonesia and Nepal that, all the UN agencies are accountable to both local and national government. They cannot implement anything solely without proper permission from

Government. We want to say, no one above from accountability. Bangladesh as sovereign country, all agencies must be accountable to Bangladesh Government.

- 12. Fund Concentration in two Organization and monopolization of the response:** In the recent time, CCNF and local NGOs observed that most the fund is concentrated to a national born INGO and a local organization in Cox's Bazar. Concern is being raised by local media and civil societies. This is creating one kind of monopolism in humanitarian aid. This must be equitable and fair allocation of aid in other local actors.
- 13. Why so many expatriates from a particular Country:** In many INGOs and UN who are working in Cox's Bazar, and the majority of these organizations have their Chief Executive Officer from a particular country. We believe this poses a concern for our national security system. Therefore, we urge the Government of Bangladesh and respective organization to ensure that these positions are filled by Bangladeshis and that all matters of national sovereignty and security are carefully considered with this in mind.
- 14. The Rohingya Coordination Team (RCT) should be inclusive with the participation of local government and political representations.** has been formed with the participation of seven agencies, including 2 local, 2 national, and 2 international organizations. However, we have observed that there are no local government representatives in the coordination mechanism. As a result, many decisions are primarily driven by the interests of UN agencies, as they hold the majority within the coordination group. CCNF strongly calls for the inclusion of local government representatives, especially Members of Parliament (MPs) in the coordination structure to ensure that the interests and concerns of the people of Cox's Bazar are properly represented and addressed.
- 15. Form Rohingya Repatriation Commission:** In Cox's Bazar, more than 1.3 million Rohingya refugees currently reside. Over the past two years, more than 200,000 additional refugees have entered Bangladesh. Instead of repatriation, the numbers are growing, which is becoming a heavy burden on the country. As a result, the people of Cox's Bazar are deeply concerned about the lack of progress on repatriation. We have yet to see a clear roadmap. In response, CCNF is advocating for the establishment of

a Rohingya Repatriation Commission, which would be accountable for the repatriation process and serve as a platform to report progress and share updates with the local community.

16. Visitors in Rohingya Camps must meet with LNGOs and Public Representatives:

We clearly understand that visitors are visiting Rohingya Camps on purpose. They heard the voices of Rohingya people but not to LNGOs and Public Representatives. As these local people suffering most their voices must heard. Local people know the best interest for their own. So, any decision must be implemented through sharing and discussing the issue with LNGOS and Public representatives.

17. Ensure local People's Employment in Rohingya

Refugee Crisis Management: Many humanitarian workers from Cox's Bazar district have already lost their jobs. There is a growing concern among host communities that local people are losing employment opportunities more than people from outside the district. Local people should be given priority in recruitment and jobs.

18. No involvement of Local NGOs in any decision-

making platforms: We have been observing that, decision making forums and platforms are possessing less interest in involving local NGOs.

They hardly publish or circulate this kind decision making meetings or arrangement where mostly UN agencies and Government were involved. In the recent days, building two storied LCs in camps were not discussed with any NGOs or public representatives. We afraid that, is there any political purpose serving through not involving local NGOs and public representation? We strongly oppose this kind of behavior.

19. Transparency on the 25% for the Host Community

People: Host communities in Cox's Bazar have faced social, economic, and environmental pressure because of the long Rohingya crisis. Therefore, greater transparency is needed regarding the commonly mentioned 25% allocation for host communities. The basis of this allocation, where it is being used, which sectors are covered, which organizations are implementing the activities, and how the funds are being spent should be clearly shared. This will improve accountability and transparency and trust of the host people.

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