



PRESS RELEASE

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Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and Coxsbazar CSO NGO Forum (CCNF) joint information sharing meeting in Cox's Bazar on Rohingya relief and host communities.

## **Need Medium Term Planning combining Refugee Humanitarian Response and Development in Cox's Bazar**

12<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The ISCG and CCNF organized a consultation in Cox's Bazar on " Joint Response Planning (JRP) for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis and affected Host Communities" in Uni Resort, Cox's Bazar. The meeting was presided by Additional Deputy Commissioner Cox's Bazar Mohammed Mahidur Rahman; the Chief Guest was Mohammed Abul Kalam, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC). The key note presentation was given by Ms. Margo Baars and Ms Rhonda Gossen of ISCG. Ms. Sumbul Rizvi the Senior Coordinator ISCG gave the welcome remarks at the event.

Mr. Mohammed Abul Kalam emphasized the importance of preparing for medium term planning combining the Rohingya humanitarian response and development plans for host communities in Coxsbazar. This was reiterated by Ms. Rizvi for effective and efficient response.

"This problem is not a creation of Bangladesh" said Mr. Abul Kalam. "We are the custodians, till such time that these forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals can go home. There are increased tensions, boundaries between host community areas and camps are disappearing. Infrastructure that was meant to support 2000 people, is now supporting 30,000 people, for example. There are livelihood and security issues."

Approximately one fourth of planned activities and requested funds under the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis are targeted for the Bangladeshi host communities (336,000 persons) directly impacted by the crisis.

"The Government and people of Bangladesh have welcomed the Rohingya refugees forced to flee targeted persecution," said Ms. Sumbul Rizvi. "Support to the host communities affected by the crisis is critical to the Joint Response Plan. Its implementation depends upon timely support from donors and through integrated social cohesion activities."

Panelists praised the provisions under the JRP for host communities. There are 101 projects, targeted at host communities, across 10 sectors ranging from Education, Food Security, Health, WASH and others. Currently, there are 28,944 families who receive livelihoods support; 7,700 families/individuals and 500 farmers received agricultural inputs training and equipment.; 25,000 people have received micro-gardening support; eight tons of medicines has been provided to the Civil Surgeon Office.

An area where much more needs to be done is the environment. Forests shrank dramatically when the refugees began settling, wherever they could find land. But beginnings have been made. Nine grass nurseries have been established in Ukhia and Teknaf Upazila for slope stabilization, Agencies are collaborating with the Forestry Department for production of planting materials for land stabilization works to be conducted in June and July (14 sites) seedlings ready for planting with rainy season.

In preparation for the monsoon, 40 km of connecting roads in Ukhia and Teknaf is being repaired; 20 public buildings are being assessed and upgraded for possible shelters: and main waterways (canals) are being dredged to avoid overflow and flooding.

Mr. Kalam, the RRRC highlighted the need for a development plan along with the humanitarian response. He emphasized peaceful coexistence, assessing impact both in individual and community level, equity in distribution, inclusive participatory mechanism in planning and implementation. Ms. Rizvi agreed that development actors must do more in this response, prioritizing areas where refugees and host communities live.

“It is both frustrating and disappointing to see that the funding response to the JRP is meagre,” says Mr. Abul Kalam. “We urgent the international community to strongly come with support to the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. Otherwise it will be difficult for Bangladesh to continue providing this level of support.”

Other speakers at the consultation included the Civil Surgeon Dr. Abdus Salam, Divisional Forest Officer Md Ali Kabir, and Additional Superintendent of Police Mr. Chailau Marma. The event was moderated Mr. Abu Morshed Chowdhury and Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury Co-Chairs of CCNF. Ms Sonjukta Sahani from IoM and Mr Davide from WFP has also spoke on the occasion. Locally elected leaders of local government from Ukhiya and Teknaf, namely Mr. Zafor Ahmed from Teknaf Upazila, Mr. Nur Ahmed Anwari from Hoyangkong Union, Mr. Mozaffar Ahmed from Palongkhali Union, Ms. Marzina Begum from Rajapalong Union, Ms. Tahera Akhter Mili from Teknaf Upazila also spoke on the occasion. Donor representatives included the Embassy of Sweden, ECHO, JICA and USAID. There were around 100 participants, especially from government agencies, local governments, and ISCG sector coordinators, UN agencies, INGOs, local and national NGOs and donor agencies.

The Chair of the meeting Additional Deputy Commissioner Mr Mahidur Rahman said that the ultimate solution is how we all together can expedite the safe and voluntary repatriation, and all actors should contribute to that. He concluded the meeting proposing to create separate fund for host community development.

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