

## JRP 2019 Hardly Responsive to Conflict and Security

### We Demand Full Transparency of Humanitarian Aid

1. **Why JRP 2019 is important this year:** There are three reasons including, (a) Grand Bargain Bangladesh mission has given specific recommendations in last September 2018 on localization and Rohingya response in Bangladesh advising for a roadmap to implement those in next 3 years. We identified 26 parameters from the mission report to implement (enclosed herewith). (b) The essential support services are already established in the refugee camps. However, different conflicts are started to be manifested through some incidents in the camps and adjacent areas. JRP 2019 should have been prepared taking that conflict sensitivity into account. Some reported security threats especially from possible fundamentalist groups are hardly considered in the JRP 2019. (c) Social Cohesion and peaceful coexistence is fundamental need for Cox's Bazar. Congestion in the camps is a big issue until the repatriation with dignity. Quality education and life skills are also essential for the refugees to be self-depended before they return to their homeland. Operationalization of these issues and advocacy with government for this is fundamental.
2. **Little participation of locals in JRP 2019:** Like the previous one, the new JRP 2019 had little participation of local government, local civil society and local NGOs in during its preparation. It is rather basically prepared by ISCG (Inter Sectoral Coordination Group) which is mainly composed of and influenced by the expatriates from UN agencies and INGOs. English is the medium of their language. we have been demanding since the beginning:
  - (a) All correspondence and communication of ISCG in Cox's Bazar and field level should be in Bangla.
  - (b) Representatives of local CSO and NGOs should be included in different groups of ISCG leadership structure.
  - (c) With the same spirit, the leaders of 5 Union Parishads (UP)<sup>3</sup> accommodating refugee camps should have the scope of participation.
3. **How CCNF tried to influence JRP 2019:** We continued positive engagement and dialogue with UN agencies and INGOs to institutionalize the Grand Bargain (GB) commitment and Charter for Change (C4C) into the humanitarian response and development interventions. To raise this important issues CCNF organized a number of public seminars, press conferences and handing over memorandum to the UN signatories since August 2017 both in Cox's Bazar and Dhaka. To influence the JRP 2019 we organized two public seminars in Cox's Bazar on 25<sup>th</sup> November and in Dhaka on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 and raised major concerns to be included in the document are:
  - (a) Long-term development planning for Cox's Bazar.
  - (b) Full transparency of the humanitarian aid has come so far and will be coming in next should be implemented.

ISCG and UN leaders hardly kept their commitments of implementing this. The participation of locals in ISCG should have been institutionalized.
4. **Ratio of fund received so far and how much has gone to Rohingyas:** According to UNHCR, around 172 thousand Rohingya families are living in the camps, the total number of refugees are 739 thousand. Within the framework of JRP 2018 \$727 million is raised so far. It means \$351 per month (\$4,217 per year) could have been allocated for each Rohingya family.
 

Leaders from UN agencies and INGO participated in those seminars gave commitments which are hardly reflected in JRP 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum (CCNF). [www.cxb-cso-ngo.org](http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org)

<sup>2</sup> Joint Response Planning 2019 for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh.

<sup>3</sup> The lowest local government tiers of Bangladesh

We demand detailed account of these money with classification, including: (a) what is the overhead and management cost, (ii) cost of foreign expatriates, (iii) allocation for partnership, meaning how much is allocated for implementation through local NGOs and local government, (iv) how much is allocated for the host community, and ultimately (v) how much is directly going to Refugees as input and other benefits.

5. **Lack of financial transparency and tracking:**

Access to the above-mentioned figures is very difficult. We wonder how the people and government could participate if such a lack of transparency prevails and in view of Grand Bargain commitments, how people would be able to demand reduction of transaction cost and the effectiveness and efficiency of the fund? Transparency is fundamental for participation. We repeatedly demanded this, however, little initiatives are taken from ISCG about it. It should be noted that, ISCG can get accounts of UN agencies where most of the INGO and NGO accounts could be found in NGO Affairs Bureau. So, time has come for a single line of financial transparency available in one stop service. Government should take this into account.

Around 1,300 foreign expatriates (1,000 in UN agencies and 300 in NGOs) are currently working and nearly 600 vehicles are being used in Rohingya response. Is these demand-driven or supply-driven?

6. **Cox's Bazar economy shattered:** Natural resource of UKhiya and Teknaf is being withering away. Livelihood of the people of limited income in Cox's Bazar affected by the hike of prices of daily essentials and house rent. Government must look upon these and should have some control over inflation. Otherwise-

- (a) There will be more damage in Cox's Bazar economy,
- (b) There might be a Bubble up Economy due to inflation in local level as happened in Sri Lanka after Tsunami.

If government have some control over this aid economy, it might be an impetus towards the productive economy of Cox's Bazar. This aid economy is not much helping the lower strata of

Cox's Bazar including farmers, fisherman, limited earning job holders, lower and middle-income entrepreneurs. Only few people are being benefitted, especially the employees of UN and INGOs, some high salaried employees of local and national NGOs, landlords, warehouse and building owners, 3 to 5-star hotels and the vehicle renting business.

We have heard about some of the grant and loan being disbursed by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank to the Rohingya refugees. People want to know more about this, particularly how this money would be utilized in Cox's Bazar.

Aid economy that tends to promote consumerism could also promote the productive economy, at least in some part. It is estimated that, \$1 billion out of total \$1.7 billion will be able to come to Cox's Bazar. Government should be able to have a plan about this money towards productive economy. Fundamental is UN agencies and INGOs must be transparent to a financial tracking system run by government in this regard.

7. Our basic expectations:

What we are demanding are nothing new. We have been continuously and consistently pleading for all these since August 2017. All of our expectations are crosscutting and could be easily addressed. Most of these are recommended by the Grand Bargain Bangladesh mission in September 2018.

- (i) **Bangla communication:** Official correspondence in Cox's Bazar and the filed should be in Bangla. The expatriates in Rohingya response might learn Bangla to comply with.
- (ii) **Participation of Local Govt, CSO and NGOs in ISCG:** The local government leaders, district agencies of government and local CSO NGOs must be able to participate in different ISCG groups.
- (iii) **Roll back from field operation;** UN agencies and INGOs must be withdrawn from field operation handing them over to local NGOs and local government. UN agencies and INGOs should be limited preferably in Dhaka only for monitoring and capacity building.
- (iv) **Financial transparency and tracking:** ISCG must ensure financial transparency with classification-based tracking system for

the humanitarian aid received. The classifications could include:

- Management and overhead cost, including all offices from Geneva and to Cox's Bazar,
- Field operation cost i.e. downward other than Cox's Bazar,
- Direct input and staff management cost and the ratio,
- Allocation for partnership with local NGO/CSOs for implementation.

This cost ratio has to be continuously reviewed aiming to gradual reduction of transaction cost of aid to ensure its highest effectiveness.

(v) **Reduce the cost of expatriate and vehicle and promoting a common logistical pool:**

Cost of expatriates and vehicle should be drastically reduced. UN agencies and INGOs should immediately declare a plan for this. There could be a combined and common logistical pool to optimize the cost. Please note that, there is a commitment in Grand Bargain about this.

(vi) **Policies for localization, accountability and ethical recruitment:** UN agencies and INGOs should prepare and implement following policies:

- a. **A partnership and localization policy based on criteria with long term objectives and implementation must be with transparency and competitiveness.** Local NGOs and CSOs (even without government registration) should be given priority before the national NGOs.
- b. **A conflict of interest policy should be prepared for the national staff of UN agencies and INGOs** to maintain neutrality in respect of selection and treatment to the local partners. UN agency and INGO national staff have to conduct the partnership in a transparent and neutral approach.
- c. **There should be an easy and open complaint response mechanism for all internal and external stakeholders including Rohingya refugees.** Received complaints should be mitigated within a shortest possible time ensuring full protection of the plaintiff.
- d. **In view of human right, mutual respect and accountability, there**

**should be a Code of Conduct, which have to be followed by all.**

- e. There should be a **policy on participation and accountability toward Rohingya refugees.**
- f. **There should be policy and planning on providing life skill opportunities for the Rohingya refugees to engage them in work instead of giving a chance to get engaged in extremist activities. Orientation and awareness on human right and secularism through popular culture** should be promoted as the counter narrative on infiltration of religious fundamentalism and terrorism in the camps.

(vii) We/ CCNF believe that **all the field and service staff job in Rohingya response should be allocated to at least 70% of local people based on qualification and competition.**

(viii) All the **job circulars and tender documents must be published in Bangla and in local print media in Cox's Bazar.** There **should be no head hunting for recruitment and UN agencies and INGOs should sign off a common and ethical recruitment policy.** Staff poaching from local NGOs should be stopped right now.

(ix) There should be a **common salary framework so that present practice of ever escalating salary enhancing and high turnover/ staff poaching from local NGOs is stopped. Operation cost of Rohingya response will also be reduced.**



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