

# OUR COMMON SPACE, OUR COMPLEMENTARY ROLES

## Equitable Partnership for Sovereign and Accountable Civil Society Growth

WHS (World Humanitarian Summit) and The GB (Grand Bargain) one Year On: Bangladeshi NGOs (Non-Government Organization) are organizing themselves, developing expectations agenda soliciting cooperation from INGOs, Donors and UN agencies and preparing their own accountability charter

### SUMMARY

#### Expectations from Bangladeshi NGOs.

This document states the background, process, principal premise and major expectations of Bangladeshi NGOs from INGOs (International NGO), Donors and UN agencies in view of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the Grand Bargain (GB) policy outcomes and in view of the discussions on 'development effectiveness' (DE). These three global policy discourses give importance to the role of civil society / NGOs and especially the primacy of local civil society in respect of promoting a humanitarian and democratic society.

#### Who We Are.

We are Bangladeshi national and local non-government organization (NNGO/LNGO) or civil societies working within national boundaries with a home grown or indigenous background. In the whole document where we have used the term NNGOs, it's also includes the interest of the LNGOs, but in specific issues where it is appropriate we have used the term LNGO. We do both humanitarian and development activities,

and consider ourselves a part of civil society. We appreciate the WHS outcome. We are also inspired by the Grand Bargain (GB) commitment, signed up to by 53 of the largest humanitarian donors, UN (United Nations) agencies and INGOs (International Non-Government Organization) to improve the way aid is delivered to people in need.

#### Our Belief and Our Premise

We see all NGOs as part of civil society. We believe that NGOs should work both in service delivery and support civil rights through advocacy. We believe that civil society nowadays is a necessary third sector to interplay with state and market, to serve the people, as historically the state and market have grown with some limitations in responsiveness. All these three sectors need to work to promote a humanitarian and democratic society. Whether in global south or in north, civil society have common struggle to have rightful space in this regard. Now days almost all states and UN agencies have agreed to give such a space to civil society as we see this in aid effectiveness and development effectiveness discourse.

#### Our Demands and Expectations.

We also believe that, in the 'global south', INGOs, donors and UN agencies should only play a complementary role with equitable partnership approach for sovereign and accountable growth of a national civil society sector. In view of this principles we have



had actively participated in WHS process during 2014-2016, we did country wide focus group discussions, three national level dialogue including with ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Associations) in Dhaka. Our aspirations was circulated through two leaflets in WHS Dushanbe and Geneva consultations and finally in Istanbul Summit. Five key demands in this regard were as follows.

- (i) INGOs should stop fund raising at national level;
- (ii) whistle blowing and complaint & response policies should be included in UN and INGO partnership policies;
- (iii) minimum 10 % overhead cost to the partner organization, not only for central management but also for future institutional development;
- (iv) stop the brain drain from NNGOs, introduce equal level of compensation for same level of competencies;
- (v) Partnership agreements must include a clause of arbitration and joint / reciprocal evaluation.

Since the beginning of 2017 we have started the process of multiplying the outcome of these WHS, GB and DE process. We have translated all the documents in Bengali language and made separate briefs. During April to July 2017 we have gone through four meetings and consultations process, developed a country wide campaign proposal on this and finally came out with a list of expectations. Which have had lunched publicly during the first week of August and discussed in a public seminar/ dialogue on 19th August 2017, the world humanitarian day, where country directors / representatives, second level leadership from INGOs and UN agencies participated along with leaders from government, NNGO/ LNGOs, and media representatives have participated. The seminar / dialogue have got wider coverage in Dhaka media (<http://coastbd.net/local-civil-society-demands-equitable-partnership-from-ingos-and-un-agencies/>). Based on the outcome and discussion, we have further detailed our expectations and demand.

- (1) INGOs and UN agencies' primary role should be to facilitate and promote local civil society in global south.
- (2) Principled and criteria based partnership with NNGOs, creating a transparent and healthy competition but maintaining highest level of inclusiveness and coordination.
- (3) Bengali should be the communication language for all INGOs and UN agencies working in Bangladesh while they will be communicating with partners.
- (4) Activate existing networks first, prior to going for forming new network, the process must be transparent and inclusive.
- (5) INGOs must prioritize a campaign against "De- globalization of humanity and responsibility" in their country of origin. (

- 6) Cash programing without considering local context, undermines civil society development and a community approach in southern countries.
- (7) Priority should be to create self-esteem and self-made approach: capacity standard have to be contextual, accountability should be first rather than accounts-ability.
- (8) Localization means local control: national pooled fund should be managed, controlled and owned by NNGOs. Creating intermediary has concern in respect of sustainability.
- (9) LNGO and NNGOs whose leadership originated from specific locality or from specific group of people should get priority to get projects for that specific locality or groups: No to imported NNGO or LNGOs with temporary project assignments only.
- (13) We all (UN organization / INGOs/ NNGOs/ LNGOs) should have participatory multi stakeholder and open review of cyclone (e.g., Ruanu and Mora) and flood (e.g., Haor) response in view of WHS and GB policy outcome. Repeated duplication of mistakes is wastage of resources.
- (14) Local contexts of corruptions have to be considered. Generalizing stigmatization and threats cannot be an answer, our own capacity and NNGO governance must be given space to respond first.
- (15) INGOs and UN agencies must be transparent about their project details to their NNGO partners. Each other overhead or management cost should be jointly decided.
- (16) INGOs and UN agencies must distinguish luxury vs. necessity in their cost culture. Maintaining the same of level of cost structure for development services should be same at least at field level.
- (17) Expatriate employment should be demand driven, emphasize local expertise. Deploying fresh graduate expatriates in executive position should be avoided.
- (18) We demand rightful representation in the LCG (Local Consultative Group) and the



HCTT (Humanitarian Coordination Task Team).

- (19) Accountability toward communities is indispensable in localization: The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) is a key reference and certification an option available in this regard.
- (20) INGOs and UN agencies should orient their partners to be inclusive and transparent toward a single NGO sectorial unity or coordinated process based on common minimum principles to regain pride and also to regain bargaining capacity.
- (21) Last but not least: We, national and local NGOs, need to stand on our own feet with an accountable, inclusive and knowledge based approach.

### Where We Are Going.

Our campaign will continue, also via the divisions and districts in Bangladesh, and culminate, in the first half of 2018, in a conference with a final version of our Charter of Expectations, along with an Accountability charter of Bangladeshi NGOs. We are confident that we will attract more signatories.

The campaign has been initially supported by Oxfam International and Start Fund Bangladesh, has got solidarity from ADRRN (Asian Disaster Risk Reduction Network) and NEAR (Network for Empowering Aid Response) with also encouragement from Charter 4 Change.

Our Common Space, our Complementary Roles: Equitable Partnership for Sovereign and Accountable Civil Society Growth

### This Document.

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a specific geographic subarea of a national boundary, we consider a Local NGO (LNGO). An NGO that originated in a country of the so-called 'global south' or 'north', but works in more than one country, we consider an international NGO (INGO). In our own process and demands, we do not separate 'national' from 'local' NGOs except if there is a specific operational justification. Overall however, we have a common national agenda.

### How Did we get Here?

We were actively engaging prior to the actual World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. We conducted a national consultation process, that also involved focus group discussions in 20 districts of Bangladesh on different issues related to disasters. Common issues from those consultations were;

- a. Institutional and capacity building support to NNGOs.
- b. Priority to working with local government and government agencies.
- c. Need of priority based investment to construct embankment in coastal and flood prone area.
- d. Increasing investment for disaster risk reduction and building resilience community.
- e. INGOs should not compete with NNGOs in respect of fund hunting at national level.
- f. UN should consider new protocol of climate displaced people as we feel that Bangladesh alone will hardly be able to meet this displacement situation.

After the consultation, and on the eve of the Dushanbe South and Central Asia WHS preparatory consultation, we developed a



statement titled “Equal and Dignified Partnership for Sustainable Capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction and Response”. <http://coastbd.net/equal-and-dignified-partnership-for-sustainable-capacity-in-disaster-risk-reduction-and-response/>

Before the WHS global consultation in Geneva we developed another statement “Making Humanitarian and Development Activism Localized and Accountable: 7 Initial Actionable Proposals on Reshaping Aid”. <http://coastbd.net/7-initial-actionable-proposals-on-reshaping-aid/>. These 7 actionable proposals were elaborated after a series of consultations in different parts of the country with NNGOs representatives that ended with a national level consultation with NGOs and Government policy makers. The statement was widely distributed during Geneva WHS consultation as well as in WHS Istanbul Summit (May 2016). Key issues of the statement were;

1. Setting Indicators on Principles of Partnership and Periodical Review.
2. Prioritize Accountability in place of ‘Accounts Ability’. Accounts Standard Must be Set Out according to the Local and Situational Context.
3. Complaint Response Mechanism and Protecting Whistle Blower Policies should be included in INGOs and UN agency’s partnership policies.
4. Minimum 10% overhead Management Cost to the Partner Organization, Not Only for Central Management, for Institutional Development also.
5. INGO and UN Organizations Must Consider Getting Out of Direct Project Operation and Fund Raising in National Level:
6. Stop Brain drain from NNGOs. Introduce Equal Compensation for Same Level of Competency. Reduce the Gap in Salary and Benefits during Partnership.
7. Partnership Agreements Must Include the Clause for Arbitration and Joint / Reciprocal Evaluation:

Also relevant to all this was the national seminar on “Principles of Partnership: Learning and Way Forward” (August 2015, Dhaka), organized by COAST in cooperation with the International

Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). (See the report at <http://coastbd.net/principles-of-partnership-learning-and-way-forward/>). And our national seminar, on World Humanitarian Day, in August 2016 on “WHS Outcomes: Experiences of Recent Disaster Response in Bangladesh”.

And on 19th August 2016 we observe the world humanitarian day in organizing a public seminar in Dhaka title “WHS Outcomes: Experiences of Recent Disasters Response in Bangladesh”. It was an event with national level stakeholders to popular the WHS outcome. ([http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Seminar-Report\\_WHS-World-Humanitarian-Summit-Outcomes-Experiences-of-Recent-Disaster-Response-in-Bangladesh%E2%80%9D\\_-Rumees\\_19-August-2016.pdf](http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Seminar-Report_WHS-World-Humanitarian-Summit-Outcomes-Experiences-of-Recent-Disaster-Response-in-Bangladesh%E2%80%9D_-Rumees_19-August-2016.pdf))

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### **Our Belief and Premise.**

We also believe that, globally, all NGOs, national, local and international, are part of 'civil society'. All of us constitute a 'third sector' in a space also occupied by the 'state' and the 'market'. Historically the state organs (including political parties) and market actors face limitations to meet certain public aspirations, especially to marginalized and crisis-affected populations. It is now widely accepted that states, market and civil societies, can complement each other, if they are in a balanced relationship. Our common aim of all civil society actors is to obtain a rightful place and role in that space. All three sectors however need to work together for a humanitarian and democratic society in which human rights are respected.

We believe that we have a unity of purpose among 'southern' and 'northern' NGOs that we need more or equal space and a right full share as civil society for participation. So that we can play an effective role for our common future and public goods. Especially in the 'global south', the need is immediate and imperative. But, we also believe that our state (including political forces) has to be active and has a primary role in this regard.

We believe there is a strong nexus between humanitarianism and development activism: While humanitarians emphasize saving life, development leads to a society that does not create such major humanitarian crises. Nowadays almost all the development NGOs take part in humanitarian work, but there is also a continued need for those that focus solely on humanitarian works, like the Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies and MSF. So, we should consider the need of unity in work in both sectors rather than bringing the discourse of separation in this regard. Our common objectives are to build a society where no humanitarian crisis will arise in the future, which is a long-term development goal too.

Though we have similar longer-term purposes, NGOs from the 'global south' and 'north' should also have different roles, complementary to each other. In the 'global south', we need equality and dignity-based partnerships for a sovereign and accountable civil society growth. We know that we have committed allies in the 'global north', and we invite them to support our expectations.

### **Our Demands and Expectations.**

We believe that, in the 'global south', INGOs, donors and UN agencies should only play a complementary role with equitable

partnership approach for sovereign and accountable growth of a national civil society sector. In view of this our demands and expectations are as follows.

#### **(1) INGOs and UN agencies' primary role should be to facilitate and promote local civil society in global south.**

One of the primary outcomes of the WHS is localization and accountability. It means promotion of local level civil society, which requires appropriate partnership. There has been a re-affirmation of the Principles of Partnership (<https://www.icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment>), agreed by 40 organizations, UN agencies, World Bank, international Red Crescent and Red Cross movement and others during 2007. These principles are Equality, Transparency, Result Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity. But over the past 10 years, there has been little follow up and operationalization of those partnership principles in practice.

In the 'global south', INGOs & UN agencies both have to play facilitating role to promote local civil societies; they must step back from operational roles. There is therefore need for (i) the articulation of partnership policies by INGOs and UN agencies, and their implementation through an open, transparent and competitive process, (ii) a code of conduct in this regard, (iii) an annual open review of implementation of such partnership principles and code of conduct, (iv) a downward management accountability mechanism (e.g., information disclosure policy, complaints response mechanism, whistle blowing policies for beneficiary / affected populations and partners) and (v) investment in creating demand side among the NNGOs, so that they can have the dialogue to change the existing narrative of "sub contacting or patron client relationship". INGOs and UN organizations have to examine why they are working in an operational manner in the 'global south', while they hardly are

sustainable, their local level advocacy are hardly politically acceptable and their operational / transactions costs are much higher.

- (2) **Principled and criteria based partnership with NNGOs, creating a transparent and healthy competition but maintaining highest level of inclusiveness and coordination.**

The WHS outcome and Grand Bargain commitments, should not be equated with more direct to national actors, including NNGOs. They also refer to greater NNGOs accountability toward communities, implanting sustainability of development and humanitarian efforts with the communities, and mobilization to obtain and enable an enhanced state responsiveness for public goods also. INGOs, UN agencies and donors must prepare their partnership policies and set criteria, also with this in mind. Following points should be considered in this regards, (i) NNGO should not only be effective in service delivery but also in advocacy on civil rights towards state, (ii) the NNGO should have a transparent accountability framework which is active, regular and free from conflict of interest, and (iii) proven track record of generating own resources for fast response and gaining sustainability. The partner selection process must be in a transparent and competitive process toward a reward for good and committed work.

- (3) **Bengali should be the communication language for all INGOs and UN agencies working in Bangladesh while they will be communicating with partners.**

English is the communication language being used by all INGOs and UN agencies in Bangladesh. Because of this a lot of NNGOs, especially LNGO, are hardly able to submit project proposals or communicate with them properly. We also believe that this language barrier prevents appropriate feedback from field level to reach the policy level. The language issue is also a factor in the development of a system of "consultancy", in which we see some malpractices and unfair bias. It deprives several committed NNGOs and especially LNGOs from competing effectively for funding. But almost all INGOs and UN agencies have capable Bangladeshi staff who can easily communicate in Bangla and can translate into English. Expatriates, while working in Bangladesh, should also learn "Bangla" for development communication in this regard.

- (4) **Activate existing networks first, prior to going for forming new network, the process must be transparent and inclusive.**

When INGOs think to create a network, they must first consider whether what they hope to achieve can be achieved with existing networks. Help those first. INGOs must also consider and specify how, in long run, the network will run on a sustainable basis. INGOs must consider it on criteria based, through a transparent and inclusive process

and all above in such a way that, it should not create tension and conflict within the sector: The sector needs unity and coordination, especially within the context of Bangladesh. Creating new networks in haste, without such analysis of possible negative consequences, seems just work for the sake of work.

- (5) **INGOs must prioritize a campaign against "De- globalization of humanity and responsibility" in their country of origin.**

Most northern INGOs have originated with private individual funding, out of an awareness in the 'global north', that humanity is global and that individuals must take responsibility as global citizens. But we observed that, due to the increase in public / government funding, most of the INGOs have become busy with fulfilling conditions given by Northern governments, playing a role as mere operational intermediaries. In this present age of growing xenophobia and protectionism, inter- country inequalities, growth of the war industry and thereby imposing war and creating mass exodus, climate change catastrophes -especially in the 'global south'- which is also becoming a existential threat to mother Earth, continuous denial and inaction to the climate science and Paris climate agreement by powerful leaders in the global north', INGOs should re-consider their present role. They should ask themselves whether they are appropriately using their role as a part of civil society in their home country or are just part of an aid architecture as a mere sub-contractor. They should prioritize conducting development education and political advocacy in their northern countries against such "de-globalization of humanity and responsibility", should uphold the spirit of "global citizenship" that we are living on one planet, we have to save it and we have to share responsibility and resources.

- (6) **Cash programing without considering the local context, undermines civil society development and a community approach in southern countries.**



While the Grand Bargain contains a transformative agenda, and initiates a reform process in the humanitarian architecture, there is also a workstream in it, relating to programming, notably cash distribution. Several donors and INGOs have already been increasing this approach for several years, including in Bangladesh. We assume that this is to induce markets and private sector thinking and actors in the humanitarian sector. We welcome market and private sector involvement in humanitarian sector. But it should not be generalized and imposed on what can be very different contexts e.g., (i) there are some areas where the market is hardly available and works; even when it works during the crisis period, it become costly to afford, (ii) there are some indispensable community livelihood infrastructures like water, drainage and sanitation, which have to be managed by communities with contributions of their own, while state agencies are not there or cannot respond as fast as needed, (iii) In the long run, repeated practice of cash distribution, will also result in an attitude of relief dependency, rather than an attitude toward self-dependency and (iv) while cash distributions can be conducted through NNGOs, we should not undermine the organizational development aspects of that NNGOs. We need to understand that NNGOs need to exist as they have been indigenously originated to meet some limitations of state and market forces, and they are the fast and first responders in humanitarian crisis. But they also want to address root causes too.

We have some experiences with irresponsible cash programming being practiced in Bangladesh, e.g., (i) most of the time, cash has gone to the head of family head, which in Bangladesh is mostly the male. While he purchases things, he hardly considers the need of women, children and older ones who are often treated as subordinate culturally, and (ii) Cash gives importance to individual needs rather than those of a community, especially they tend not to contribute to repair or rebuild community infrastructure. In view of above reflections, donors and INGOs should review their cash programming, not over-rely on it too quickly, ignoring local contexts.

- (7) Priority should be to create self-esteem and self-made approach: Capacity standard have to be contextual, accountability should come before accounts-ability.

Capacity development is a popular buzz word in NNGO development; it seems that it's a never-ending effort. We need to revisit the approach critically; but we are

not denying the need of capacity development. But time has come INGOs and donors to encourage and acknowledge the relevance of self-esteem, promoting self-made approaches first among the NNGOs, and this by creating a conducive environment i.e. through equality and dignity based partnership relation.

We also need to appreciate 'capacity' in local contexts e.g., what is expected from highly qualified & highly paid salaried staff, in a northern social perspective, cannot automatically be expected from less qualified & low paid staff in a different southern social perspective. We feel the best approach is to give priority to develop accountability practices of NNGOs first, accounts- ability will follow naturally.

- (8) Localization means local control: country-level pooled fund should be managed, controlled and owned by NNGOs. Creating intermediaries increases sustainability concerns.

Donors are becoming more open to creating national pooled funds, managed and owned by NNGOs, for humanitarian and development response. This will not only reduce transaction cost, but also result in more contextually appropriate response, greater voice for local actors and greater chances for sustainability. There is successful evidence in this regard in the 'global south'.

When it comes to humanitarian action, there are several such pooled funds, which are generally managed and controlled by international agencies. INGOs should reconsider this approach and donors should start experimenting with pooled funds being managed and controlled by NNGOs. This can be achieved also through an open bidding process with clear criteria, with candidates limited to NNGOs.

- (9) LINGO and NNGOs whose leadership originated from specific locality or from specific group of people should get priority to get projects for that specific



locality or groups: Generally speaking, we should say 'no' to imported NNGO or LNGOs with temporary project assignment in the localities.

Local NGOs means organizations that work and whose leadership has grown from a locality / districts / regions / specific group or community. There are some NNGOs too have originated and whose leadership has originated from a specific locality. Both types of LNGO and NNGO should receive priority to receive projects specified for that specific location and specified community. This is important for sustainability, advocacy, long term impact and local community participation. There should not be other NNGOs or LNGOs coming in, if an accountable and home grown NNGO or LNGO is available with that home grown leadership from that locality found in that specific location.

- (10) We all (UN organization / INGOs/ NNGOs/ LNGOs) should have participatory multi stakeholder and open review of cyclone (e.g., Ruanu and Mora) and flood (e.g., Haor) response in view of WHS and GB policy outcome. Repeated duplication of mistakes is wastage of resources.

Since 2013 to till date, while we are having these WHS and Grand Bargain discussions, we all have implemented relief and rehabilitation work in Bangladesh, especially responses to cyclones Roanu, Mora and flood in Haor. We should consider doing reviews in this regard. Such reviews should not only be a consultant-based work, it should be through an open / transparent and multi stakeholder (including community) participatory process, from the local to national level. So that it will not be a mere report production, it should also be a process where everybody will learn, which will help us for a new narrative of transformation, as proposed by WHS and Grand Bargain.

We have to consider (i) who are the NNGO that responded first and fast, (ii) who is NNGOs leadership that has come from those localities, (iii) who are the NNGO that work on sustainable basis, do advocacy, and have a long term basis in that locality, (iv) there should not be more practice of NNGO 'imports'? The fact that a INGOs and/or donor agency has a prior partnership with that non-local NGO, cannot be a justification for this anymore. One objective must be the growth of both indigenous leader and organization, and their involvement in local issue based advocacy, long term existence, long term impact, community participation and sustainability.

- (11) Local contexts of corruptions have to be considered. Generalizing stigmatization and threats cannot be an answer, our own NNGO governance and oversight mechanisms must be given space to respond first.

We do respect the concern of INGOs and donors about corruption. But corruption has to be considered in view of local contexts and practices, e.g., in remote places, vendors simply do not use receipts. This cannot be considered automatically as corruption. Moreover, like other southern countries, in Bangladesh too we live in an insecure society, in such a situation if corruption happened at a lower level, you cannot say that whole organization and leadership is corrupt. INGOs and donors have to look at the system, whether a system exists to prevent corruption and how the system can be improved further. After receiving complaints, INGOs and donors should not act directly, they should give the space to the governance of the NNGOs to respond first. Wholesale threats and stigmatization cannot be an answer in this regard.

- (12) INGOs and UN agencies must be transparent about their project details to their NNGO partners. Each other overhead or management cost should be jointly decided.

Most of the INGOs and UN agencies hardly give any overhead cost (central management cost as compensation plus institutional development cost for future) to their local partners NNGOs. They only very rarely share the total project details, including who are the donors, what is the money and what are the objectives to achieve etc. A new trend has developed that adds a percentage of operational program costs for their management cost, without detailing and earmarking what that management must look like. This is insensible as projects have to be managed to meet quality standards.

But while INGOs and UN agencies maintain huge operational structures in the name of supervision of the local

partners; with some money for contingency or reserves, there is no such funding for NNGOs that will enable them to keep a core staff. In addition, there can be much delay in releasing funds. Often the challenge of keeping experienced staff, which also has the institutional memory etc., has to borne by the partner NNGO – who only gets only a small % of the total expenditure. INGOs and UN agencies must be transparent about the overall project and budgetary frameworks, and involve their partners in deciding how the management fee will be shared.

- (13) **INGOs and UN agencies must distinguish luxury vs. necessity in their cost culture. Maintaining the same of level of cost structure for development services should be same at least in field level.**

UN agencies and INGOs maintain a luxury cost culture, which is very different from the NNGOs, which gives a questionable image to the public. Most of the time they justify this with reference to so-called international standards and security arrangement. But they do not apply the same logic for their partner NNGOs. When organizing training and public gatherings, for example, they maintain a certain standard and cost culture. But if they organize the same training or gathering with partners, they allocate lower budgets. Naturally, this raises a lot of questions and mistrust with general stakeholders on NNGOs. So INGOs and UN agencies must bring down their cost culture in maintaining the principles of what is NECESSARY and what is LUXURY. If they work for humanity and not for the profit, there should not be any cost which is not necessary. The same standard for cost culture, in a given environment, should be applicable to all actors, be they INGOs, UN agencies or NNGOs, especially for development services e.g., training.

- (14) **Expatriate employment should be demand driven, emphasize local expertise. Deploying fresh graduate expatriates in executive position should be avoided.**

In their project proposals, INGOs and UN agencies typically include expatriate staff. Most of the time, this is supply driven, it should be demand driven. Sometimes INGOs and UN agencies deploy fresh graduate expatriates in an executive position which in fact jeopardize the implementation as s/he has no experiences. At the end of their contract, and at the cost of the project and its intended beneficiaries, there might be useful experiences for that expatriate. But the local experienced staff and partners have to suffer the repetition of mistakes, which results in frustration among the local partners and staff too. Bangladesh has an impressive development experience, and has a large number of local experts, who are not only serving in the country but also serving in abroad too. So, we believe if there is hardly any need of expatriate, if there is a need of expert, it should be local.

- (15) **We demand rightful representation in the LCG (Local Consultative Group) and the HCTT (Humanitarian Coordination Task Team).**

We observe that INGOs and donor agencies getting space and representation in a LCG (Local Consultative Group) and HCTT (Humanitarian Coordination Task Team). Ironically, while Bangladesh has strong civil societies / NNGOs as development actors, nobody has raised the issue of their representation in the LCG and HCTT so far. We feel our Government and the UN must consider an appropriate level of representation of NNGOs in these forums.

The Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCCT) and LCG have no criteria and procedure to incorporate NNGOs. There must be a system and transparent process to represent an adequate number of NNGOs in the LCG and HCCT. At present only one hand-picked NNGO are invited to the HCTT. This cannot be considered as appropriate representation.

- (16) **Accountability toward communities is indispensable in localization: The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) is a key reference and certification an option available in this regard.**

NNGOs have great role and responsibility in turning localization into practice. They should put in place accountability, quality management and governance throughout the organization. By complying with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) one organization can evidentially demonstrate accountability to community and establish a quality management system in the organization. This increase the confidence of donors, UN agencies and INGOs to collaborate with such NNGOs.

Regarding the accountability toward community most of NGOs have developed a series of standards through a long study action-and-review process, facilitated by CHS Alliance ([www.chsalliance.org](http://www.chsalliance.org)), and proceeded by the

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAPI). Now the process is also being joined by different UN agencies and bilateral donors. Based on this CHS, there is a certification system that has been developed by a separate independent body, the "Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI) ([www.hqai.org](http://www.hqai.org)). Some Bangladeshi NGOs are the member of this CHS Alliance and one of the Bangladeshi NGOs who got two-time certification for accountability and quality management from HAPI, is now in the process of HQAI certification. This is a costly affair in fact, at least if it is for LNGOs and NNGOs. NNGOs and LNGOs have to be in alliance and take the initiative to commission low cost and a contextually appropriate certification processes in the country, taking inspiration from global initiatives. This can reduce the capacity development costs of NNGOs by INGOs/ donors / UN agencies.

- (17) INGOs and UN agencies should orient their partners to be inclusive and transparent toward a single NGO sectorial unity or coordinated process based on common minimum principles to regain pride and also to regain bargaining capacity.

Until the 1990s all NGOs in Bangladesh had a common unity, standing for overall NGO / civil society interest. But since then, this has become lost. Although there are a lot of impacts due to NNGO activities in this country, but there are little appreciation for NNGOs and little recognition for their contributions and sacrifice in society. INGOs, donors and UN agencies have coordinated processes for their own representation, and for the negotiation of their own interest, especially with the Government. But NNGOs do not have such platform or coordinated process. INGOs, donors and UN agencies cannot say that they do not bear any responsibilities in this regard.

We urge all INGOs, donors and UN agencies to tell their partners to maintain highest possible level of transparency and inclusiveness to their fellow members in civil society sectors and also to tell them to be united, at least around a common minimum agenda and principles.

As NNGOs we also urge our networks and forums to forge a unity or a coordinated process with common minimum agenda / principles at all level. We need to regain our pride and our self-esteem and stand up and joint bargain for the promotion of an effective civil society role towards the purpose of a humanitarian and democratic society.

- (18) Last but not least: We, national and local NGOs, need to stand on our own feet with an accountable, inclusive and knowledge based approach.

NGOs have to understand the changing paradigms and have to rethink their role, in line with following principles, (i) Humanitarianism and development is not mere service delivery, it is also an advocacy standing for civil rights. Thus we have to integrate in our work a rights based approach, i.e., facilitating our state and political forces to deliver and be responsive for public goods, (ii) We have to be internationalist but with patriotism, taking the voice from local to national and to international, as all policies and practices integrated in those levels. For that we also have to be more knowledge and technology based, (iii) we have to be accountable simultaneously to peer and as well to subordinates. Towards communities, we must have an accountability framework which is active, regular and free from conflict of interest, (iv) At national level it is might be difficult to have a common platform, but we can coordinate with each other (e.g., in providing information on what we are doing, inviting to each other's events, not attacking each other in creating face-loss situation), (v) Critical but constructive advocacy and positive engagement with our government and political leaders for policy and practice changes toward making of a state which is responsive, (vi) Maintaining a transparent and rule based cost culture which reflect our commitment to poor or downtrodden people and value-for-money philosophy. We are working for social welfare and a RBA (Right Based Approach); we are not working for profit. We need to maintain simplicity so that money and resources overwhelmingly go to the community, (vii) Implanting sustainability index / indicators in our effort so that we will have own resources to respond fast and long-term capacity to stand without dependency and (ix) Advocacy to our Government so that the Government will come forward to provide public resources to our initiatives in a structural manner, to reduce the external aid dependency.

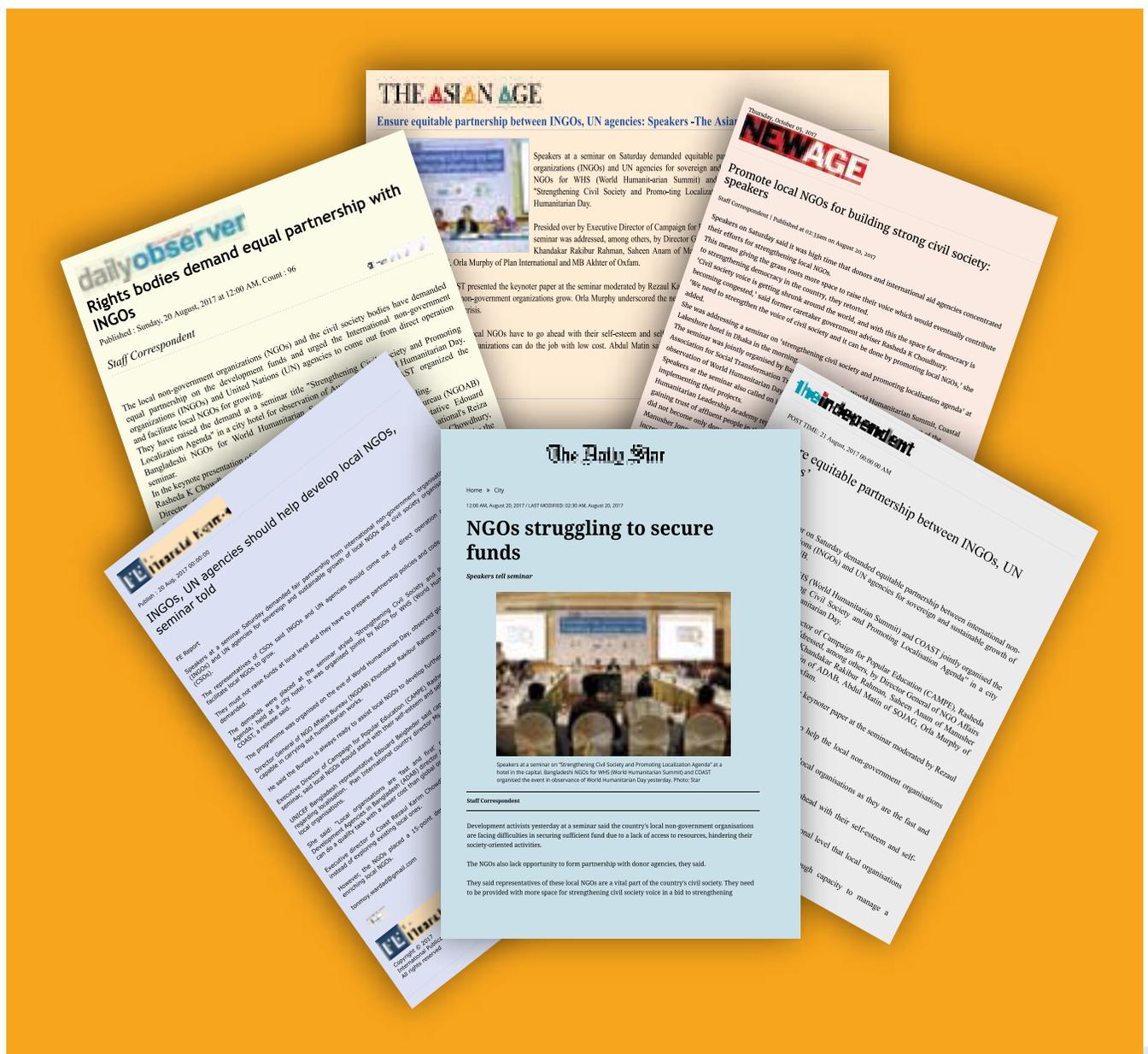
### Our Campaign.

Our campaign is countrywide, transparent and inclusive. The above expectations and demands will be revised, updated and enriched over time.

Over the past five months, we have developed these expectations / demands primarily in consultations with NNGOs who have been involved since WHS process. We have broadly shared these emerging expectations and demands, for an open dialogue, in Dhaka on 19th August i.e. on the eve of World Humanitarian Day. Now we have the plan to go the division level at least, if possible to all the districts of Bangladesh.

In all places we will disseminate and discuss the outcome of Development Effectiveness, WHS and the Grand Bargain. Then we will revise, update and enrich these expectations and

demands. We are also contemplating for us an 'Accountability Charter' and a related road map, to bring that alive. We plan to announce that result and charter and updated expectations from all other stakeholders at another conference by the middle of 2018. We solicit cooperation from our Government, donors and INGOs friends for our sovereign, sustainable and accountable growth in Bangladesh as an effective third sector i.e. as civil society making its contribution to a humanitarian and democratic society.



We the Bangladeshi NGOs are hereby endorsed by (logos in alphabetical order)



**COAST** *Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust*

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