

DG NGOAB discussed NGO concerns in Rohingya Response in Cox'sBazar.

9th February 2018. Today evening in a dinner meeting newly appointed Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau of Government of Bangladesh Mr. K.M Abdus Salam has shared the concern of NGOs in respect of Rohingya Response in Cox'sBazar in COAST CMTC (Cox'sBazar Management and Training Centre). The program have been participated by high level officials of local / national / international NGOs, namely PHALS, SHED, HELP, COAST, Mukti, Gonoshastya, NONGOR, MT International, ACF, Save the Children, ACF, Water Aid, Tear fund, NRC, AAR Japan, NGO liaison officials from ISCGs and Co-Chairs of CCNF (Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum).

NGO representatives shared the concern on present slow approach toward FD7 in respect of awareness and protection related activities. NGO Representatives has also shared the difference of need analysis between RRRC, DC and NGOs in this regard and also the hassles in accountability requirement in district administration. NGOs said that quality and other checking which is happening now in DC office, which became of costly matter of NGOs as loaded Trucks have to wait here for more than two / three days, this process could be done in Camp side, as there are CiC (Camp In Charge) is there.

DG NGOAB said that he will look after the FD7 related issues and also speed up the process of approval. He advised NGOs to raise the issues on hassles of "quality check" in DC office and coordination of need analysis with DC and RRRC, as NGOAB always receive request from DC and RRRC with their own interpretations of need analysis. NGOs have proposed there should be a committee in this regard under the leadership of RRRC/DC with the participation of NGOs, who should sit and update the need identification monthly basis.

NGO representatives have also discussed the present trend of 3 months basis approval of FD7, which is creating a lot of problems, especially in respect of managing fund and approval thereby. They have urged it should be extended for more than 6 months or as like as government has signaled to UN to plan until December 2018.

NGO representatives have also raised the issues of visa checking problems in Coxsbazar. All most all the local and national NGOs and one INGO representatives said that, there are supply of expatriate is more than its real demand, or there are lack of need analysis in this regard, whether all these all expatriate is needed at all, while Bangladesh is being treated as example in respect of disaster management, there should be the spirit both in INGOs and UN to use as much as possible local expatriate and local staff. NGO representatives has expressed concern on "Tourist" visa while in fact they have applied to have the visa related to work or NGO purpose in Coxsbazar, they urged the rule should be changed in this regard. DG NGOAB said that, he has very little to do in this regard, but he is willing to raise the issue with Home Ministry and if needed in NTF (National Task Force). Please note that DG NGOAB is the member of NTF too.

DG NGOAB wanted to know about the genesis, process and ToR of ISCG. NGO liaison officials of ISCG and some of the participants have briefed him in this regard. There is good level of coordination in ISCG; moreover ISCG has some technical capacities on information collection and analysis. ISCG at present preparing Joint Response Planning, and they are taking participation of RRRC and DC too. One of the INGO representatives said that, any study ISCG doing they should take the relevant government agency with them otherwise the relevant government agency will have little interest to own those studies.

Local NGOs raised the issue of localization, that UN and INGOs should not go for direct operation in here. DG NGOAB said that he will off course encourage INGOs to go for partnership with local NGOs in this regard.

DG NGOAB has listened the impact of Rohingya influx with host communities, which is being hardly being addressed so far. NGOs said that, a general consensus has already risen that at least 25 % of Rohingya aid should be allocated for host communities. COAST is doing study in this regard with the instruction from DG NGOAB and also with the advice from DC in this regard. DG NGOAB said that he will encourage long term project for host communities in this regard.

Reported by Rezaul Karim Chowdhury 10th Feb 2018.