

Coxsbazar, 3rd October 2017

To

Mr. Mark Lowcock

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under Secretary General of OCHA

Copy : Mr Jeremy Wellard, ICVA Asia Representative

Subject: Submission from Coxsbazar Civil Society / Local NGO Coordination Process

Dear Sir

1. Firstly we thank you for your time to sit with NGOs in Coxsbazar, also thanks to ICVA and its Asia Representative Mr Jeremy for organizing this meeting in haste. Coxsbazar Civil Society / Local NGO coordination process have had four meeting already, our objective is not only relief coordination in respect of Rohingya response, but also to promote a local civil society in the Coxsbazar region, who should be responsive to refugee and human rights. We believe in the primacy of our government and we believe in positive engagement with the government in this regard, so far we are proud of our government; they have done a commendable job in this regard.
2. For different reasons Coxsbazar is a district with little CSO (Civil Society Organization) growth, in respect of development there is not much progress, in respect of education the literacy rate is low and drop out rate is high particularly for girls, especially in bordering sub - districts. So, we strongly feel that UN, development partners and INGOs should look into these matters of CSO growth and development with the host community too. Host communities also have a dire need of health, education, gender development, infrastructure, environment preservation and other support. Host community already feels brunt of extra inflation, damaging of local ecology, ground water level fall, extra law and order situation, competition in scarce resources and in employment.
3. We appreciate UN for WHS (World Humanitarian Summit) and Development Effectiveness (DE) processes, where key outcomes are localization and accountability. Also the GB (Grand Bargain) process where UN agencies are taking active part. In view of these three processes Bangladeshi local and National NGOs have undertaken a long process and developed a Charter of Expectations from UN Agencies and INGOs where we have 20 demands. We launched the documents through a public seminar on last 19th August on the eve of World Humanitarian Day. Please find this attached herewith. Our expectation is based on the principle "Equitable and dignified partnership for an accountable and sustainable growth of CSOs in Bangladesh".
4. We appreciate the role of UNHCR, IoM, WFP and UNICEF in respect of this Rohingya Refugee crisis. But we urge them to consider local NGOs not as mere Implementation / Contractors Partners; they should be considered as "Decision Making Partners" too. In view of policy outcomes from WHS, DE and the GB and in view of our Charter of Expectations, we have following expectations from UN agencies working in Coxsbazar and related to Rohingya relief.

- (a) They should prepare partnership policies and code of conduct which should be transparent and competitive toward local CSO development.
- (b) Partnership should be with local NGOs / CSOs who are indigenous from this locality, and whose leadership has grown locally too.
- (c) There should be an open complaint response mechanism in those agencies.
- (d) The ISCG is doing a good job in respect of generating information. However different task teams now are comprised mostly of UN agencies and INGOs, we urge there should be representation from local NGOs. ISCG should recognize the role of Local NGOs whatever their status of partnership with INGOs. When Local NGOs receive permission from government for their projects, so they should be included in the ISCG, as they are accountable to the government.
- (e) UN agencies should reconsider their “total and single handle approach” (e.g., they say that they will take care of all food supply / education). Monopolism (or one single organization doing everything) cannot supportable for local CSO to growth. For the sake of innovation and diversity there should be space for local / National / International NGOs to work. Historically we found that these NGOs play a great role in respect of CSO development.
- (f) UN agencies should employ local staff and local experts rather than hiring foreign expertriate and staff from non locality. They should also procure goods from local markets too. There should not be poaching of local NGO staff and any competition in hiring houses. UN agencies and IFRC must remind that local NGOs to live here on sustainable basis in long run.
- (g) UN agencies should also publish their project and aid data in view of IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiatives) principles, so that the public can monitor this, please note that we have concern on high transaction cost of UN agencies.

We hope, you will consider our concerns and disseminate those in the UN system, especially to agencies who are working in Rohingya relief operations.

Sincerely yours,

On behalf of Coxsbazar NGO Coordination Process and Civil Society

Saiful Islam Kalim, Chief Executive, Pulse Bangladesh

Arifur Rahman, Chief Executive, YPSA

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