

19 August 2019. World Humanitarian Day

Contribution of Women of Cox's Bazar to the Rohingya Humanitarian Response



1. History of World Humanitarian Day

Sergio Vieira de Mello, a Brazilian citizen deployed to Baghdad on this day (August 19) in 2003, was killed with 21 of his colleagues in a bombing. United Nations General Assembly on 28 August decided to observe 19 August as World Humanitarian Day to commemorate this tragic event in the history of the service of endangered humanity worldwide. UNOCHA leads this day observation and commemorate the sacrifices and contributions of deployed staff.

2. World Humanitarian Day Program in Bangladesh

On the occasion of World Humanitarian Day, COAST organized various activities in Dhaka in 2017 and in 2018 in Cox's Bazar by Cox's Bazar CSOs and NGOs Forum (CCNF). Last year, emphasis was on developing local organizations and bringing them in the leadership to make humanitarian assistance effective and sustainable. In addition, the demands of the safety of the lives of local workers

engaged in humanitarian work were also raised.

3. This year's highlight is the contribution of women

This year, the main theme of World Humanitarian Day is the contribution of women to humanitarian assistance programs. The website of UNOCHA states that women first raise their hand to endangered people, before any kind of public-private support arrives. Because they are the first to realize the feelings of the affected people.

In view of this, CCNF has initiated a discussion meeting in Cox's Bazar this year, where women activists working at the field level and women leadership of local government are invited. They will share their experiences and guide the humanitarian workforce from a different perspective.

4. Status of women Rohingya refugees

In the meantime, humanitarian aid workers' experiences for Rohingya



Rosina Akhter, a humanitarian worker killed in a road accident in Ukhia

15 July, 2018. Humanitarian worker, working with a local NGO named Mukti Cox's Bazar, Rosina Akhtar was killed in a road accident while she was going to her work. Rosina was a resident of Balukhali in Ukhia. Husband's name is Manzoor Alam. She was a dedicated livestock worker of Mukti Cox's Bazar.

The Arakan road passing through Ukiya is not in fact suitable for vehicles used for relief for more than one million refugees. Rosina Akhter would not have had to die in the accident if infrastructure measures were taken to ensure transportation of heavy vehicles. When discussing the contribution of women humanitarian workers to this year's theme on World Humanitarian Day, we are remembering Rosina Akter to bring back the issue of ensuring the safety of women workers.

refugees and various UN surveys have shown that women, children and the elderly are the most affected among refugees. In particular, there are three dangerous situations and risks for women, girls and child refugees.

- **Child marriage:** The Rohingya population has historically been deprived of all forms of formal education and healthcare by the Myanmar government over the past few decades. As a result, women are victimized as a result of child marriage. About 90% of

girls are at risk of child marriage. Along with lack awareness, they have no legal or institutional support to prevent child marriage.

- **Health Problems:** Rohingya women and girls are also suffering from a wide range of health problems. Especially as they lack awareness of reproductive health and safety, the services are also inadequate. As a result, they are suffering from various ailments, having children at a young age and deteriorating health.



- **Frustration about the future:** Without formal education and higher education opportunities, a nation can never aspire. They can't dream about the future. While relief and food assistance are usually sufficient for the Rohingya refugees, they have no such initiatives regarding formal and higher education opportunities. In

this case, women suffer the most. A girl has no future dreams without education in front of her baby. Marriage is the only way ahead of them, which encourages early marriage.

5. Women workers of Cox's Bazar should come forward

It was the first day that women from the local population of Cox's Bazar extended their support to the Rohingya refugees. It is expected that all the women workers of Cox's Bazar, especially the female leaders of the local government, women members of the union council will play a role in securing the recognition of their work, as well as the safety of the women employed in humanitarian assistance.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh has already been honored with the title of Mother of Humanity by extending a helping hand to the refugees. It is a rare honor for Bangladesh to carry out humanitarian work worldwide. It is now our duty to protect this reputation.

6. To international and UN agencies

On the eve of World Humanitarian Day, we would like to draw attention to all the international NGOs and UN agencies engaged in humanitarian assistance for Rohingya refugees on a number of issues, such as:

- Workers should be compensated for accidents or any other hazard while working on humanitarian assistance.
- Local organizations and local governments will have to be brought to a leadership position to bring stability in development and humanitarian assistance work.
- Salary discrimination among employees of international organizations and local organizations engaged in the same work have to be eliminated.
- Local government should be given importance, especially in infrastructure and social planning.

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