

Subject: WFP Coxsbazar urged to prioritize Local NGOs and follow a transparent partnership selection: CCNF leaders meeting with WFP officials in Coxsbazar.

1. Introduction

20th July 2021. Today [CCNF](#) leaders Reza Co-Chair CCNF and ED [COAST](#), Morshed Co-Chair CCNF and ED [PHALS](#), Bimal Co-Chair CCNF and ED [MUKTI](#) and Arif Member CCNF and ED [YPSA](#) have had virtual a meeting with WFP Coxsbazar leaders Korijo, Sudip and Kiron. CCNF leaders explain following four issues and urged for a revise advertisement on inviting EoI with priority to local NGOs in view of their international commitment on localization Also urge and to follow a criteria based, free from conflict of interest, competitive and transparent practice of partnership selection process

1. Appreciation

- i. **Thank you the senior leadership of WFP for prompt response to CCNF letter on concern on their advertisement of 15th July and for giving time** for this meeting.
- ii. We know that you have already organized **cash transfer to around 1 lac people** in Coxsbazar through government and your partners. We thank WFP for this.
- iii. We must tell you about the [CCNF](#), it is the network of around 60 local and national NGOs working in Coxsbazar, our vision is to promote a civil society sector to make Coxsbazar society a human right and gender right sensitive society. It is the reason we urged for implementation of Grand Bargain commitment especially stream no 1 transparency, stream no 2 support to local and national CSOs and no. 6 participation revolution. These talking point is the outcome of CCNF general meeting have had held on 19th July.
- iv. We know the **history of WFP** in Coxsbazar, since WFP inception until first few months of Rohingya response it is the local NGOs who were the partners of WFP have had done the critical job for food supply and others. Ironically it is the truth that later those local NGO partnership have had discarded and most of the partnership has gone to INGOs and also to few national NGOs.

2. Our major concern and request

- i. We have **already expressed dismayed** in our letter that, in your advertisement on sentence “international/non-government organization (international NGO/NGO)” published in the newspaper dated 15th July. It is hardly a reflection of WFP as a Grand Bargain signatory as WFP has stated in its [international website as policy as importance to local and national responders](#).

- ii. So, in concrete term, we request you **to revise the advertisement and re-publish with re-written advertisement**, with concrete strategy to give priority to local NGOs. **We also request to extend the submission date as the time has fallen within the greatest festival time i.e., Eid-ul-Azha.**
- iii. We have another one major concern is that the **NGO/ partnership selection process** (a) should be criteria based, (b) free from any conflict of interest, (c) competitive and (b) transparent.
- iv. We also urged WFP in Coxsbazar should regularly meet with CSOs in Coxsbazar so that how we together can support Rohingya refugee and Coxsbazar host community in respect of food security. Note that, WFP have a tradition of such a regular consultation with NGOs in global level.

3. Why we are requesting for this, what are the reasons.

- i. It could be mentioned the term of local and national NGOs, while the term “International NGO” made prominent. [While IASC \(Inter Agency Standing Committee\) policy paper clearly mentioned what are the definition of local and national. There is a debate to brand internationally federated NGO as local or national NGO while it is registered in a country.](#) It is not necessary to open the Pandora box i.e., why local and national NGOs, **especially local NGOs has given prime importance, for the sake of sustainability and accountability.** It is a decided matter from Grand Bargain commitment as outcome of WHS (World Humanitarian Summit, May 2016) where [WFP is a distinguished signatory.](#)
- ii. Not only that, **in international level for implementation of the Grand Bargain, WFP (Ms. Valerie, the Deputy Executive Director WFP) is the Co-Chair of IASC – OPAG (Operational Policy Advocacy Group),** the group is the primary group to operationalize advisory body to guide five different results groups, on all the policies before sign from the IASC principle group, headed by ERC – Under Secretary General. As IASC has formed with UN General Council resolution, compliance of IASC policies somehow a mandatory to all of us. [Reza from COAST representing NGOs from developing countries in the IASC-OPAG.](#)
- lii. Not only that its **defeat the spirit which has been mentioned in the papers ‘WFP and Grand Bargain (May 2019)’ and ‘WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (July 2014) we Deliver Better Together’.** Those paper given importance to local and national responders.
- v. On top of that, **SEG (Strategic Executive Group) has recently published Localization Road Map, SEG three co – chairs has given a note on this.** it is an outcome of two year process of Localization Task Force (LTF), and they have given details and preference to local NGOs.
- vi. Our position in respect of **locals means the NGO who has originated from Coxsbazar and the NGO leader who is from Coxsbazar.** They should be given preference, then rest should be given to the national NGOs. **We prefer local NGO as if there are no funding one day it is the local**

NGO will remain in Coxsbazar, naturally they have accountability to the locality and with the same view they have the best possibility of sustainability with low management cost. They will remain for human right and refugee right too along with food security. Whether it is INGO or national NGO they will flee from the district if they will not have funding.

- vii. Regarding **INGO our position, they should not raise any funding from any source in national level. They should raise fund from their origin or from international level as they have the better mechanism** in this regard.
- viii. Local NGOs are first responders in Rohingya response, in first 45 days after August 2017 it is the local NGOs along with local community given food and all other life support before international actors came in. Even it is the CCNF who have had advocacy with government for greater access for international humanitarian actors. CCNF have been organizing around 13 dialogue to maximize the understanding with humanitarian actors, policy leaders and host community leaders.
- ix. Rohingya response in Coxsbazar is in a unique situation as there are no conflict situation like Middle East, local host community are in peaceful mind. But in all most all humanitarian index, Coxsbazar district is in lag behind. Due to accommodating extra 1.1 million of refugees it has huge pressure especially in environment and other economic situations. Localization will have advantage in this regard not only in respect of economy and environment but also in respect giving leadership space to the local CSOs and local government. UN agencies can create a model in this regard of [localization with whole of society approach \(WOSA\) in respect of refugee response](#).

4. Why we are urging for a partnership selection policy and practice should be on (i) criteria based with long term objectives, (ii) selection process free from conflict of interest, (iii) must be in competitive and (iv) transparent in practice.

- i. Most of the time, excuse has given not to having partnership with the local NGOs, that they have the lacking of capacities, in respect of due diligence. But there are 40 years of international agencies working in this field there were little of technology or know how transfer. **Along with capacity development capacity should be considered should be a matter of exchange and as capacity convergence too. We strongly believe the role of international agencies (whether it is UN agency or INGOs) they should have the role of monitoring and technical assistance.**
- ii. **Coxsbazar is the only district which has lowest density of home grown NGOs, so we need strong patronage in this regard so that there will be more civil society voice in future.**
- iii. **There should be criteria especially on good governance and how the NGO will be sustainable in future.** The NGO will have to strive in this regard.
- iv. There should be a criteria too, the NGO should have **proven track record of raising voice on human right and democracy too, in fact they are the civil society.** We do not like to say an NGO as an NGO or civil society, if they only do service delivery. We do not like to

see that WFP is promoting service delivery NGO / mere sub-contractor in Coxsbazar or in Bangladesh.

- v. There are huge examples in Coxsbazar that **international agencies picked the NGOs in a much hidden way, out of favoritism, without any competition for good governance and built in process for sustainability.** We like to see that, we the NGOs are competing each other for excellence in good governance, and also for gaining sustainability in course of time.

- vi. There are lot of examples that NGOs has given EoI, international agencies came and did assessment, tons paper has given as those were asked for, **but there was no communication or a letter has given that the NGO has not selected and the reasons has not explained.**

Reza Co-Chair CCNF and ED COAST, Morshed Co-Chair CCNF and ED PHALS, Bimal Co-Chair CCNF and ED Mukti and Arif Member CCNF and ED YPSA, 20th July 2021
