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Rohingyas deprived of two-third funds

Aid misappropriation local NGOs' concern

Cox's Bazar Correspondent

In face of corruption allegation in management of aid meant for Rohingya families depriving them from two-third of the allocations keeping local NGOs out of scene, Bangladesh-based organizations have demanded transparency in fund disbursement.

A recent investigation found that aid of \$438 per month came for each Rohingya family but only one-third of the amount (\$132) reached to the recipient families and only 4 per cent of the aid goes through local NGOs.

In this backdrop, Bangladesh-based non-government organisations (NGOs) working in Rohingya response programme in Cox's Bazar have demanded transparency in the management of aid meant

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for the Rohingyas. Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum, a group of local NGOs, at a virtual press conference on "Joint Response Plan 2021, Rohingya Response Management and Strategy, Hardly Fit for the Purpose and Futuristic" came up with the demand

on Sunday. The platform at the press conference narrated its opinion ahead of the Joint Response Plan 2021 on Rohingya issues which would be launched tomorrow on May 18. UN agencies are preparing the Joint Response Plan.

At the press conference, COAST executive director Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, PHALS executive director Abu Morshed Chowdhury, YPSA chief executive Arifur Rahman, and Mukti Cox's Bazar chief executive Bimal Chandra Dey Sarke spoke, among others, spoke. Arifur Rahman said that there should be aid transparency as a CCNP study found that aid of \$438 per month came for each Rohingya family but only one-third of the amount (\$132) reached to the recipient families and only 4 per cent of the aid goes through local NGOs. There should be a system

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of transferring technical know-how so that no foreign aid worker would be required in the field by 2021, he said.

Abu Moshed Chowdhury said that there were three separate lines of coordination management —Inter Sector Coordination Group, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, and the office of the deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar.

"There should be single line authority for coordination with a single pot fund management. A committee consisting of three agencies should sit on a monthly basis with the participation of local members of parliament, local government representatives, Local NGOs and media representatives. There should be a joint and counterpart system with UN agencies from a single office with one step service. Participation of members of parliament and local government representatives should also be in committees in foreign and home ministries," he said.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury said that the ISCG-led by UN expatriates had hardly been able to produce any statistics on how much fund went to host communities, how much money was used for local procurement and how many local staff had been employed.

"There are a lot of local and national NGO funds still out of the purview of this joint response plan," he said.

He also said that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Medicine San Frontiers did not report to the ISCG. So, the ISCG's eligibility for the purpose is not beyond question, he said.

There is no analysis on future response management if there is no repatriation in the next 5 or 10 years, said Rezaul, adding that it is an inevitable protracted crisis.

According to the UN refugee commission, the 2021 JRP brings together the efforts of the government of Bangladesh, and 134 UN agencies and NGO partners.

The \$943 million plan seeks to meet the needs of more than 8,80,000 Rohingya refugees and 4,72,000 Bangladeshis in the surrounding host communities in Cox's Bazar.

Most Rohingya refugees, some