

26th June 2022,

Dear Gwyn Lewis

Subject: Key issues from local NGOs and Coxsbazar CSO NGO Forum (CCNF)

- (i) **Who we are the [CCNF](#).** We the CCNF welcome you to Cox's Bazar, it is a network of around 60 local NGOs and CSOs working in Cox's Bazar, our objectives are to make Cox's Bazar a human rights and gender right sensitive society. It is the network that organized a series of public seminars since the beginning (August 2017) of the Rohingya influx and bringing all stakeholders around the table for exchange, all above promoting peace full co-existence, and localization. On this occasion, we do like to place some of our key proposals for your consideration.
- (ii) **CCNF recommendation for streamlining.** Since 2017, while there was a scope, especially during the JRP preparation, we have raised different proposals on response management, you will find those on our website, and [here is the latest one](#). We consider the best streamlining is "Single line and single pot fund management" where the government will take lead, and the UN will take the counterpart role, ISCG offices should be integrated with the RRRC office. We have considered this to cope with the reduced level of funding and to make government agencies technically capable.
- (iii) On top of this overhaul, we have had proposed the following reformations in the present structure as follows;
 - (a) **Our demand should not be twisted.** Local NGOs and local government representatives should be in HoSoG, we raise these issues [first to Mr. Mark Lowcock in October 2017](#), and each year during the time of the JRP draft, we always raise these demands. In recent times we have observed there are representations from leading National / international Bangladeshi NGO and an international NGO in HoSoG. We made queries on this to SC-ISCG, and he mentioned that he does not know anything about this. Our concern is that all of these representations should be happened democratically and with transparency (like me and Abu Morshed Chowdhury have been elected as local and national NGO representatives for SEG, which was conducted by ISCG). What has happened, this is unfair and leads to misunderstanding, we are not in favor of any handpicked approach.
 - (b) **Make balance in over powered sectors.** On top of streamlining and also in the rationalization report, sectors have been empowered, and we are afraid that local NGOs will face problems in future. And we do like to see that, the local NGOs should take more and more roles, to cope with the reduced level of aid, and also the local leaders to an active role in social cohesion and peace building. [So, we are proposing there should Co-Chair / Co-Coordinator role in each sector exclusively for Local NGOs](#). For greater understanding, we also propose the introduction of the Bangla language in these sectors and in Cox's Bazar level. [This was also a proposal from the Grand Bargain field demonstration mission which have had happened in September 2018](#).
- (iv) **Preservation of natural resources.** During the JRP preparation, we have made a lot of requests, we have raised two issues, and we have also made these issues during the visit of High Commissioner Philip Grandi visit.
 - (a) Ban plastic in camps, there are a lot of alternatives in this regard, it is to maintain the natural fertility of lands.

- (b) Not to use groundwater anymore, promote the use of surface water, enhancing the capacity of preserving surface water, including the water from the Naf River.

These are the issues to preserving the natural resources of Ukhiya and Teknaf for the future generation. On top of these two courses of action, several other steps could be taken, so we propose a pooled fund, for the environmental recovery of Cox's Bazar.

- (v) **Supporting local economy.** Several times, we have proposed, economic integration, especially using salt and dry fish from a local producer. Again, we are proposing the same.
- (vi) **Pooled fund for localization.** One donor announces a pooled fund to support localization / local NGOs as they stated, fund management has given to a big NGO. But the donor should be aware that, any localization attempt has to follow Grand Bargain Commitment, Charter for Change, and Principle of Partnership, it is not only a fund transferring to local NGOs, it is also a process to build sustainable and accountable civil society to promote democracy and human rights in Cox's Bazar. All above local organizations and the fund manager should have intentions and experience in advocacy too. It should not be a process to create some more service delivery contractor NGOs in Coxsbazar, or the fund should not be utilized creating loyalty to the big NGOs, and not to create divide and rule among local NGOs.
- (vii) **Partnership selection should be based on policy and transparent practice.** In the name of partnership, most of the international actors are hardly following transparent and competitive policy practices for partnership selection, it is needed for an open competition for good governance and effectiveness among the NGOs. What is happening, it is a practice of cronyism, they bring NGOs from thousands of miles far, who will fly back while there will be no funding, and international actors also are not considering or putting policies which will initiate practice for accountability and sustainability. International actors even do not respond to the applicants who have not succeeded, while they should be told that, why they have not been selected. We are in favor of female leadership-based organization, but fundamental consideration should be there that, the organization should have good governance in management and also effectivity in practice first.
- (viii) **What is the fate of localization road map?** It is the SEG / UN agencies has initiated Localization Task Force, the task force was leaded by UNDP and IFRC, members of the group were UNHCR, UKAID, Save the Children, Oxfam, me / COAST as national NGO representative, Moshed / PHALS as local NGO representatives, Abdul Latif Khan and Shireen Huq. Centre for Peace and Justice was assigned to do field study and draft report. After two years of work, they have submitted the report as localization road map. Finally SEG has made the report public some time in 2020. But there was no commitment that the report will be utilized for implementation. We do like to listen what is the status of the report to present UNRC.
- (ix) **Role of local government in peaceful co-existence.** We all know that, there are growing level of tensions among the local host communities. Local government leaders has to play a role in this regard. So, we consider there should be strong presence of local government leaders in response management. So, we request all, that how in creative manner, we can take participation of locally elected leaders in response management, so that they will play a role in social cohesion and peace building in local level.
- (x) **Space for local CSOs to interact with visiting dignitaries.** In the beginning of present architecture of response, ISCG used to invite local NGO / CSO leaders to interact with visiting dignitaries. But later on it has totally stopped. Such a process was found inclusive and participatory, we the local NGOs have been able to excel our issues in evolving situation. As the situation became a protracted crisis, such an inclusive approach has a need. We will request ISCG to resume the practice, should give space to the local NGO / CSO leaders to interact with visiting dignitaries.

- (xi) We do like to see NGOP will be playing effective role to promote understanding among local, national and international NGOs and UN in response management.

Sincerely

Abu Morshed Chowdhury, Bimal Chandra Dey Sarker and Rezaul Karim Chowdhury