

Concept Note

International Women's Day (IWD) 2024 Campaign in Cox's Bazar

Campaign Overview

Global Theme	: Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress
Local Slogan	: “নারীর সমঅধিকার, সমসুযোগ — এগিয়ে নিতে হোক বিনিয়োগ” (Equal rights, equal opportunities for women — Let's invest to move forward)
Organized by	: Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) IWD Task Force
Launch Event	: 6 March 2024 (Wednesday) at RRRC Office, Cox's Bazar
Dress Code	: Purple, symbolizing dignity and justice, aligning with the campaign theme

1. Background

International Women's Day (IWD), celebrated annually on 8 March, is a global observance that honors women's achievements and raises awareness about the challenges they continue to face. In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, IWD is observed through a series of events organized by humanitarian response partners, including the Government of Bangladesh, UN agencies, INGOs/NGOs, and women's rights organizations.

This year, the global theme for IWD is "**Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress**." This theme highlights the importance of investing in women and girls to achieve gender equality and empower them to reach their full potential. This global call addresses the critical \$360 billion annual deficit in gender equality initiatives by 2030.¹

The call to "Invest in Women" goes beyond just finances. It emphasizes the multifaceted benefits of investing in women for economies, societies, and the planet. Yet, women and girls worldwide continue to face systemic barriers that limit their access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power.

The theme also emphasizes gender-responsive financing, ensuring gender equality considerations are integrated into financial planning and expenditure. This approach directs resources towards initiatives that address gender disparities and empower women and girls. Additionally, "Accelerate Progress" calls for urgent action to overcome challenges in achieving gender equality. Recognizing progress in some areas, it acknowledges the slow pace and even setbacks in others.

Recognizing this critical need, the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) of ISCG, through its dedicated IWD Task Force and in collaboration with Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), will spearhead the IWD 2024 campaign in Cox's Bazar. As an integral

¹ "Invest in women: Accelerate progress" (United Nations): <https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day>

part of the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) for the Rohingya Refugee Response, the GiHA WG brings together gender focal points from organizations with demonstrably strong expertise in gender analysis and mainstreaming within the Rohingya Refugee Response and broader humanitarian contexts. This diverse group serves as a powerful platform for advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Cox's Bazar.

2. Local Context

As the Rohingya response in Cox's Bazar enters its seventh year, the need for gender equality within both the Rohingya and host communities is more pressing than ever. The national slogan, “নারীর সমঅধিকার, সমসুযোগ — এগিয়ে নিতে হোক বিনিয়োগ” (**Equal rights, equal opportunities for women — Let's invest to move forward**), resonates deeply in this context, emphasizing the pivotal role of women's empowerment in fostering resilience and sustainable development.²

Women and girls from both communities face amplified vulnerabilities, including increased gender-based violence, restricted access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, and minimal representation in leadership roles and decision-making process. These challenges, magnified by entrenched gender norms and inadequate resources, underscore the urgent need for gender-responsive interventions.

Investing in women in Cox's Bazar involves enhancing women's leadership, ensuring gender-responsive financing to support local women-led and women's rights organizations, and fostering community engagement that includes men and boys as allies in the fight against gender inequality. This investment extends beyond addressing immediate needs; it's about building long-term resilience, necessitating concerted action from all stakeholders—government, humanitarian actors, and communities themselves.

Through targeted campaign activities, such as open dialogues bridging field-level insights with stakeholder strategies and advocacy efforts showcasing local women actors' stories, the GiHA WG aims to highlight the critical role of gender equality in humanitarian response and community rebuilding. The 2024 International Women's Day campaign serves as a vital platform for advocating gender equality in Cox's Bazar, reminding us that investing in women and girls is a strategic necessity to accelerate progress for all.

3. Campaign Objectives

1. **Raise awareness:** Increase understanding among communities and stakeholders of the critical role of investing in women for achieving gender equality and building empowered communities, highlighting systemic barriers faced by women and girls.

² Department of Women Affairs, Government of Bangladesh. Instructions on IWD 2024 celebration: <https://shorturl.at/cuwPT>

2. **Promote gender equality:** Advocate for equal rights and opportunities through gender-responsive investment, policies, and programs, aiming to empower women and ensure their representation in leadership and decision-making roles.
3. **Support gender officers and women-led initiatives:** Prioritize and support gender officers and local women-led organizations with resources, capacity building, and platform amplification, emphasizing the importance of gender-responsive financing to close the critical funding gap.
4. **Mobilize men as allies:** Engage men and boys in dialogues, actions, and initiatives that challenge harmful gender norms and foster a community-wide commitment to gender equality.

4. Campaign Activities

A. Launch Event: Open Dialogue on "Investing in Women" (RRRC Office on 6 March 2024)

- Field level session: Gender-focused field actors will share their insights, highlighting both challenges and successes in their efforts to promote gender equality.
- Stakeholder level session: Leveraging the field-level insights, this session will convene key stakeholders to develop shared understanding on key priorities and the way forward for advancing gender equality and the role of women in the response to the humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar.

B. Community Events

- Localized Engagement: Cox's Bazar humanitarian organizations, including GiHA WG members and WLOs, are encouraged to adapt the campaign's concepts through targeted activities in camps and/or host communities, fostering grassroots support for gender equality initiatives.
 - [IWD 2024 – Community Events/Activities Calendar](#)

5. Communication Strategy

- **Campaign Slogan and Hashtag:** The campaign's main slogan will be "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" in English and "নারীর সমঅধিকার, সমসুযোগ — এগিয়ে নিতে হোক বিনিয়োগ" in Bangla. The campaign will be promoted under the hashtag #InvestInWomen.
- **Target Audience:** Government officials (RRRC, CiCs, APBn, MoWCA), representatives of relevant UN and (I)NGO heads of offices, ISCG and SWG coordinators, WLO/WRO, and gender focal points who represent different multi-sectoral humanitarian actions and are working towards achieving gender equality and gender-responsive programming.
- **Multi-channel Approach:** The campaign will use a variety of communication channels to reach different audiences effectively. This includes social media, e-newsletters, website, blog posts, and local media.
- **Support and Advocacy:** The GiHA WG IWD Task Force, with the support of the ISCG Communications and External Relations Working Group, will support communications and advocacy to promote IWD

campaign activities, including the launch event and community-level events in the Rohingya and host communities.

- **Reporting and Documentation:** A consolidated report will be produced based on launch event and community event reports from GiHA WG members, and will be circulated through ISCG.³
- **Ethical Considerations:** All activities and events will be documented with informed consent at both the community and Cox's Bazar levels. Partners are required to strictly adhere to PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) guidelines.
- **Campaign Backdrop:** All organizations are encouraged to download and utilize the common campaign backdrop for their events. [High-resolution PNG and PDF files are available for download.](#)



6. Contacts

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³ Following the campaign, all sectors and GiHA WG members will be requested to submit activity summaries. These summaries will be compiled into a consolidated report and circulated through ISCG.