

Non-paper

Reinforcing Resilience in Cox's Bazar

The only sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis is a political solution that allows refugees to return to their homeland in a safe, voluntary, informed, sustainable and dignified manner.

The below close partners of Bangladesh understand the wish of the interim Government to work on a forward-leaning Road Map and are ready to contribute pragmatically on how to create conditions for voluntary return.

We subscribe to the wish of the Interim Government to create hope for the refugees. We therefore wish to explore how to reinforce the self-reliance of the Rohingya refugees and host communities while the refugees remain. These steps will also help to reduce dependence on diminishing humanitarian funding as well as restore dignity and independence for Rohingya to ensure they are healthy, educated and responsible for their own livelihoods while they are in Bangladesh and upon their eventual return to Myanmar. This would help 'bridge' the gap between the current situation and eventual return, since conditions are not conducive at this time.

We propose to proceed step by step, identifying practical measures that may contribute to the common objective highlighted above.

These measures should acknowledge the current reality in the camps: (i) a camp economy exists, (ii) pilot private sector investment is there but needs certainty and security for a positive business and investment environment, (iii) SIM cards and mobile devices are widely available, (iv) Humanitarian partners have established strong examples of the multiplier effects of international funding on host communities in Cox's Bazar (e.g. WFP aggregation centres, other local procurement and jobs linked to the response) and (v) employment exists in the form of 'volunteers' paid stipends rather than salaried labour

As such, we have the following pragmatic understanding of next steps:

- The **revision and expansion of the existing skills development framework** and upskilling of refugees is supported. This may extend to financial literacy for refugees. Creation of new opportunities for refugees to apply the acquired skills while staying in Bangladesh may also be required. This would also create efficiencies and reduce the overall cost of the operation.
- **Expand opportunities for legitimate access to cash**, which would in turn benefit liquidity and multiplier effects benefitting host communities (not facilitated by in-kind arrangements).
- **More open access to SIM cards.**
- **A shift to formalise the informal markets** that exist in the camps is supported. We may explore with the refugee community how they could regulate markets themselves. This would require that camp authorities facilitate and not hinder the purchase of supplies (including wholesale trade) and the operation of micro-enterprises.
- **Private investment in the camps and host community is expanded** to support both the camp and local economy, and for third country export. A form of assurance for investors will be needed and is to be jointly explored. Security in the camps must be maintained to assure risk-averse investors. There is opportunity and interest from the private sector to build supply chains spanning across the camps and host community (for example, the production of garments where refugees could go through one level of embroidery in the camps, but products would be finished and quality controlled in the host community). We understand the position that products from the camps should not compete with products manufactured in

Bangladesh and placed on the local market. We wish to explore with local Chambers whether there is scope for employment, provided this does not have a negative impact on the local economy.

We stand by to explore these step-by-step practical measures in detail with you. We propose to do so together with experts well-versed in refugee self-reliance work.

We are ready to engage, together with you, to listen to the specific needs and priorities of the refugee community.

Australia

Canada

European Union

United Kingdom