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Virtual Discussion on World Humanitarian Day 2024

**Humanitarian actors call safety, security for all and sustainable Rohingya Response**

**Dhaka, 19 August 2024**: Speakers highlighted the need to ensure the safety and security of aid workers and vulnerable communities in Bangladesh, especially in the Rohingya response. They also called for reducing management costs as aid decreases and criticized the World Bank’s recent $700 million loan pledge for the Rohingya and host community response. They argued that loans in humanitarian efforts are unethical and set a bad global precedent. They spoke during a virtual dialogue organized by COAST Foundation, Cox’s Bazar CSO-NGO Forum (CCNF), and BDCSO Coordination Process, in collaboration with the Alliance for Empowering Partnership (A4EP), to mark World Humanitarian Day. The event, titled "Act for Humanity—Leave No One Behind," was presided over by Shireen Huq of Naripokkho and moderated by Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Executive Director of COAST Foundation. Keynote presentation was delivered by Md. Iqbal Uddin of COAST.

Distinguished participants included Mirela Shuteriqi from ICVA, Switzerland; Gawher Nayeem Wahra from Disaster Forum, Bangladesh; Nanette S. Antequisa, Chairperson of A4EP and Executive Director of ECOWEB, Philippines; Palwashay Arbab from Community World Service Asia; Sudhanshu S. Singh, Executive Director of Humanitarian Aid International, India; Dr. Md. Shahid Uz Zaman, chairperson of Start Fund Bangladesh; Rafiqul Islam from Rupantor in Khulna; Fazlul Kader Chowdhury from Green Cox in Coxsbazar; Ms. Marianna Narhi, from NGO Platform, Coxs Bazar. AHM Bazlur Rahman, CEO, BNNRC, Dhaka.

In his keynote, Md. Iqbal Uddin expressed concern that aid workers often become victims in conflict zones instead of being recognized as heroes. Mirela Shuteriqi stressed the need to protect civilians, aid workers, and humanitarian premises. Gawher Nayeem Wahra highlighted the crucial role of local volunteers in crises and the importance of recognizing their contributions. Nanette S. Antequisa questioned why those dedicated to aiding others are targeted, calling for justice under international humanitarian law. Palwashay Arbab emphasized introducing advanced technology to reduce humanitarian causalities. Sudhanshu S. Singh pointed out disparities in salaries between local and international aid workers. Dr. Md. Shahid Uz Zaman advocated for the localization and decolonization of aid. Rafiqul Islam called for a renewed commitment to localization. AHM Bazlur Rahman warned of the dangers of cyberattacks and misinformation in conflicts. Fazlul Kader Chowdhury highlighted the dire conditions of 14,000 host community members living inside Rohingya camps, stressing the need for an inclusive response. Marianna Narhi emphasized the dignity and rights of asylum seekers, while Ferdous Ara Rumee underscored the vulnerability of women and children to crisis and the need for their safety. Other speakers included MA Halim, Amis Hossen, Barkat Ullah Maruf, and Mohammad Bin Abdullah.

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