

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs – (Embassy Dhaka)**

**Meeting in the Council for Development Policy 28 November 2017**

Agenda item 10

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| <b>1. Overall purpose</b>                       | For discussion   |
| <b>2. Title:</b>                                | Expansion of country programme in Bangladesh in response to the current refugee crisis |
| <b>3. Presentation for Programme Committee:</b> | N/A  |

## Denmark's Support to Cox's Bazar in the Wake of the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

*It is **recommended** that the frame of the Denmark-Bangladesh Country programme is augmented with 33 million DKK – or 10 % - in order to support the response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis and its adverse implications to the local community. The funds will be distributed across the existing three thematic programmes on agriculture, climate change as well as governance and rights. As indicated in the Process Action Plan (PAP) at the end of this memorandum, this will be done in close consultation with partners that are already present in the host communities or refugee camps of Cox's Bazar.*

### The Rohingya Refugee Crisis

The humanitarian crisis caused by escalating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State is causing suffering on a catastrophic scale. Over 607,000 Rohingya refugees have fled across the border from Myanmar to Bangladesh since 25 August. Thousands more reportedly remain stranded and in peril in Myanmar without the means to cross the border into Bangladesh. Refugees arriving in Bangladesh—mostly women and children—are traumatized, and some have arrived with injuries caused by gunshots, shrapnel, fire and landmines.

As of 5 November Bangladesh hosts at least 820,000 Rohingya refugees and the number continues to increase. Before this crisis began, the country was already hosting a verified population of well over 200,000 Rohingya from Myanmar - and likely many more.

Most of the refugees live in a very small area that straddles the three municipalities of Ukhaia and Teknaf in the district of Cox's Bazar as well as Naikkhongchori in the district of Bandarban. The latter has a population of 2.2 million not counting the refugees. The topography is hilly and home to some of the few forest reserves in the country. Farming, fishing and tourism are the mainstay of the local economy.

The new arrivals are adding massive pressure on services in existing refugee camps and in makeshift settlements. Basic service provision in essential areas such as water, health, shelter and sanitation cannot keep up with the exploding needs and the conditions in the settlements and camps are now so critical that there is a very real risk of disease outbreaks and epidemics.

### Alignment, Architecture and Coordination

It is widely recognised that Bangladesh has built up a quite effective capability to handle the natural and humanitarian disasters that regularly hit the country in terms of floods, inundations and cyclones. The country is applying a whole-of-society approach that includes early warning and response systems. The Ministry of Disaster and Relief has led these efforts within the government.

The management of the Rohingya refugee situation is led by a National Task Force (NTF), chaired by the Foreign Secretary with participation from 22 Ministries and Agencies. At district level, a District Task Force (DTF) monitors and coordinates the implementation of the strategy on the ground, led by the office of the Deputy Commissioner.

Since October 2017 the international community has supported the Rohingya refugee situation through the **Inter Sector Coordination Group** (ISCG) led by the Resident Coordinator. The

ISCG has been augmented by OCHA that has fielded staff from its regional office to ensure coordination and sharing of information.

Under the Resident Coordinator, the IOM is hosting an Inter-Sector coordination structure, currently convening nine active sectors led by the respective UN agencies. IOM for example is leading on site management, UNCHR on protection and gender based violence, UNICEF on nutrition and food security and so on.

The scale and dynamism of the influx has quickly overwhelmed humanitarian capacity on the ground: all sectors are scaling up, activating pipelines and surge resources, including for sector coordination and information management. Sectors are also seeking to extend support to new international and national partners to augment response capacity, as numbers are expected to continue to increase, given the severity and scale of the unfolding situation in Rakhine State and the pace of influx seen to date in Cox's Bazar.

### **Denmark's Engagement with Bangladesh**

Denmark has a broad based partnership with Bangladesh since the latter gained independence in 1971. In the 1970's Bangladesh was one of the four key partner countries with India, Kenya and Tanzania. The partnership has been widened and deepened over the years and today it covers diplomacy, trade and consular matters as well as development cooperation

The partnership was taken a step forward with the formulation of a coherent five-year Country Programme that was approved by the then External Grant Committee on March 15 2016 and by the foreign minister at the time on April 8 2016. A Government-to-Government agreement was signed on June 9 2016.

The country programme consists of three themes:

- Growth and Employment in Agriculture;
- Climate Change – Adaptation and Mitigation; and
- Governance and Rights.

### **The nexus between development cooperation and humanitarian assistance**

As a direct response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis, and in addition to the humanitarian assistance, it is suggested that the envelope of the country programme is augmented with 10 % or 33 million DKK.

This is in line with Denmark's strategy "**The World 2030**" that aims to link development cooperation with humanitarian action in order to enhance protection, self-reliance and livelihoods amongst host communities and refugees in fragile frontier regions like Cox's Bazar.

This particular contribution is part of Denmark's broad based effort to support the response to the Rohingya crisis, an effort that includes diplomacy, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in two countries as well at the international level.

This year Denmark has provided 123 million DKK in humanitarian assistance to crisis on both sides of the border through UN-organisation like UNHCR, WFP, through the Red Cross Movement like ICRC in Myanmar and Danish Red Cross in Cox's Bazar as well as through NGO's like DanChurchAid, Mission East, Action Against Hunger amongst others.

In Dhaka development partners have commenced the sensitive conversation of using development assistance to address the crisis while acknowledging that there are limits as to how open the Bangladeshi government can be about this in public. The Government recognises that the refugee problem is a long term challenge, but there is a wish to maintain pressure, including from the international community, on Myanmar in finding a political solution and eventually repatriate the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

### **The Content of Denmark's Engagement in Cox's Bazar**

The additional funds will be aligned to the three themes mentioned above with the volume set out below. Given the extraordinary situation and rough conditions in Cox's Bazar the partners for these particular interventions have to be tried and tested and have a presence on the ground:

- **Enhanced agricultural livelihoods and agro-forestry (30 %).** This intervention will include: adult education through farmer field schools with a particular focus on poultry and cattle rearing as well as growing of vegetables; marketing of agricultural produce benefitted from the enlarged market. Also, agroforestry is relevant as the refugees have a vast need for (fire)wood and are encroaching protected reserve forests to cover their needs. The partner of choice will be the Department of Agricultural Extension that is large government agency that is present on the ground with technical staff at municipal level. Danida has worked with the DAE for two decades and is presently carrying out a large programme on Integrated Farm Management (IFMC). Danida has already allocated 2,5 million DKK to supporting the host communities in Cox's Bazar. Another partner may be identified to cover the agro-forestry part.
- **Rural infrastructure like earthen village roads, water ponds and canals (50 %).** Such schemes works will be built by labour contracting societies consisting of women. Also, stabilising slopes in order to prevent landslides may be considered. The Embassy will talk to Government as to whether Rohingya women can be involved. This will be done through the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) that is a large government agency with a budget of some 2 billion USD. LGED is already engaged in delivering services to Cox's Bazar including roads to camps and settlements. Danida has worked with LGED since 1978 and the two partners are presently working on a number of climate adaptation schemes.
- **One-Stop-Crisis Cells within the camps (20 %).** This will be done through the Ministry of Women and Children a long-time partner with Danida. The ministry is one of the few government institutions that are present and active within the camps. (This is probably because its remit is regarded as compassionate and quasi-humanitarian). The Embassy is in the process of allocating 3 million DKK through an unallocated amount from the country

programme. Total support to efforts in Cox’s Bazar will thus amount to some 9 million DKK. Activities will include counselling and inter-disciplinary treatment.

**Table 1: Bangladesh Country Programme: Revised Budget Overview**

	<i>Country Programme MDKK</i>	<i>Augmentation %</i>
Agricultural Growth and Employment Programme	90	30
Climate Resilience and	125	50
Governance & Rights	120	20
Total	335	100

**Process**

A brief addendum to the Government-to-Government agreement of June 9 2016 will be signed between the Senior Secretary of the External Resources Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Ambassador medio December 2017.

In the beginning of 2018 the Embassy will follow through; in close dialogue with each partner it will formulate Development Engagement Documents that describe outputs and activities for the respective interventions.

**Risks**

There a number of risks association with this engagement.

Most refugees are amassed in a very small area. The influx continues and there are many questions as to how the situation will be managed are yet to be answered.

At this point in time it is still somewhat an open question to which extent the Government is willing to let its central agencies be engaged within the camps themselves. The Government is still in the process of shaping its policy on coping with the crisis. On one hand the Government has to keep up its diplomatic pressure on Nay Piy Daw to take the refugees back and avoid creating a pull effect. On the other hand there is a growing recognition that a potential repatriation will be painfully cumbersome, protracted, and slow and involve a limited amount of refugees. This issue will continue to evolve.

The reputational risks to a Danish engagement are considered low. On the contrary such an engagement will probably rather enhance Denmark’s strong brand in Bangladesh.

**Management**

The three new projects will be managed by the decentralised units that implement the present projects.

Each project will subject to external audits.

**Annex 1: Process Action Plan**

Updated/checked: 21/11/2017

<b>Activity/Output</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Revision of Development Project Proforma (DPP) on Multisectoral Programme on Violence Against Women	Primo 2018	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs	The Minister of Women etc has already indicated that they see this support as an emergency and is willing to expedite the paperwork quickly.
Revision of Development Engagement Document on Multisectoral Programme on Violence Against Women	Primo 2018	Embassy	The revised DED will have to be signed by the Minister of Women etc and the Ambassador
Revision of Development Project Proforma (DPP) on Climate Resilient Rural Infrastructure (CRRIP) I	Primo 2018	Local Government Engineering Division	
Revision of Development Engagement Document (DPP) on Climate Resilient Rural Infrastructure (CRRIP) I	Primo 2018	Embassy	
Formulation of a new Development Project Proforma (DPP) on agricultural livelihoods and forestry	Primo 2018	National partner (tbc)	The present engagement with the Department of Agricultural Extension is going through a phase of transition from a stand-alone programme to becoming part of the country programme. Due to the technicalities of this process a revision of the existing engagement will probably not be possible a new project for Cox's Bazar may have to be designed.
Formulation of a new Development Engagement Document (DED) on agricultural livelihoods and forestry		Embassy	See above
Establishment of the commitment in the Ministry's project and accounting systems	December 2017	Embassy	To be discussed with CFO Ettrup during this upcoming visit.
Signing an addendum to the present G-2-G agreement	Medio December	Embassy/ERD	A one page addendum will probably suffice. To be signed by the Ambassador and the Senior Secretary of ERD
Submitting a 2-3 pager to the Council for Development Cooperation	Ultimo November		
Submitting the MoU and a draft text for the addendum to the G-2-G agreement to ERD			
Political Consultations	Nov 14	ALO, Embassy	A MoU will be signed btw Dk and BD on the additional MDKK 33