

## Declaration for Endorsement

# Reclaim the reputation

## CSO-NGO are equal partner in humanitarianism and development

### 1. The idea of this coordination process

Bangladesh CSO/NGO Coordination Process (bd-coordination) is formed with the major networks of NGO/ CSO working across the national and local level in the country aiming at a coordination for a minimum common position. It is a process to facilitate a coordination among the CSO/ NGO from national to sub-district level to be agreed on common minimum principles of reciprocal cooperation and become united and strong to be effective third sector to advocacy with the state and market/private sector for development and humanitarianism by upholding the spirit of positive engagement with government. Here it will be referred as a "Process". The process will work with other networks of the sector soliciting their cooperation and solidarity to promote the overall CSO / NGO sector development in Bangladesh.

### 2. Who are the initiator and what are the necessity?

The process has been initiated by some CSO/NGO activists who have been involved in promoting localization, CSO participation in development effectiveness and SDG achievement, and promoting localization agenda whole over the country (9 divisions and at least in 24 districts) for last one year with the informal support from the executive leadership of major NGO networks, e.g., informal cooperation from ADAB, BAPA, CDF and FNB. As because of the campaign which also have link with different international networks, received huge support from both national and international media. There are interest is being seen from INGOs, UN agencies, and donors in Dhaka with positive notion and to discuss with local / national CSO leaders on how to proceed for localization. So, here it is a felt need of a coordinated approach in negotiation too in this regard.

### 3. Necessity from the international discourse: development effectiveness.

We all know the aid effectiveness discourse which have been initiated by UN, OECD countries and multinational organization like World Bank. It was originated from Monterrey Consensus (2002), then it has recognized country ownership in Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness (2005), accepted the civil society as one of the actors in Accra Agenda of Action (2008) and it has turn and titled as Development Effectiveness discourse. The discourse and discussion have continued in Busan Declaration for Effective Development Cooperation (2011) and also in Nairobi Deceleration for Effective Development Cooperation (2016).

To realize those declarations in interaction with state, civil society and market / private sector as equal partner in this development a multi stakeholder platform has been formed

named as GPEDC (Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation, [www.effectivecooperation.org](http://www.effectivecooperation.org)). Bangladesh Finance Minister is one of the Co-Chair along with the Minister from Germany and Uganda. 14<sup>th</sup> GPEDC meeting have had happened during 2017 in Dhaka. There was a civil society global process, around 80 civil society / NGOs have had a two days' workshop in Bangladesh as the part of that global process, finally CSO / NGO representatives from worldwide have had meet in in Istanbul during 2010 and prepared "Istanbul Principles of CSO Development Effectiveness ([https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/seimu/nakano/pdfs/hlf4\\_7.pdf](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/seimu/nakano/pdfs/hlf4_7.pdf) ).

It was declaration on 8 principles of civil society role in this regard. COAST was part of this journey and in Bangladesh it is acting now as civil society focal point to liaison with Development Effectiveness Wing of External Resource Division of Planning Commission of Government of Bangladesh (GoB). So, here is a need to civil society to proactive to claim this equal role in development planning in all level in Bangladesh.

### 4. Necessity from the international discourse: agenda for equality in partnership.

There is a realization among the humanitarian actors in international level, which is for the sake of sustainability and accountability, role of local and national actors should be considered as prime and as the lead in respect of humanitarian response. Taking this in view there was worldwide discussion during 2006 and during 2007 Principles of Partnership (PoP) has been formulated, including World Bank, IFRC, INGOs and UN agencies 40 organizations has signed the declarations (<https://www.icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment> ). As ICVA wrote in its website "The Principles of Partnership (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) were an attempt to acknowledge some gaps within the humanitarian reform process, which included neglecting the role of local and national humanitarian response capacity.

The PoP are not only applicable to UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and international NGOs (INGOs). The PoP provide a framework for all actors in the humanitarian space – including Governments, academia, the private sector and affected populations – in order to engage on a more equal, constructive and transparent setting. With an ever-increasing number and diversity of actors in the humanitarian sector, the PoP remain a key point of reference for partnership inception, development, implementation and review.

The PoP should serve as a reminder of the ongoing need to ensure that partnership arrangements with all humanitarian actors are rooted in equality. Further, that the implementation

of humanitarian activities seeks to involve, respect and react to valuable input from all partners and crisis-affected communities.

Bangladeshi CSO NGOs have had yearlong discussion during 2017 and placed their 18 points in a forum on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Dhaka where a number of Country Directors / Representatives from INGOs and UN have had participated. We have named the 18<sup>th</sup> points as Charter of Expectations. Please see the report in following link; <http://coastbd.net/our-common-space-our-complementary-roles-equitable-partnership-for-sovereign-and-accountable-civil-society-growth/> Bangladeshi CSO/NGOs has to claim this proactively. Please find a bangla literature in this following link....

##### **5. Necessity from the international discourse: agenda for localization.**

During 2014 with the initiatives from UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon, World Humanitarian Summit (WHS [www.agendaforhumanity.org](http://www.agendaforhumanity.org)) have had started, there was field research and worldwide country and region wise conferences, finally it was culminated in during May 2016 in Istanbul basically with Grand Bargain (GB) Commitment ([https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand\\_Bargain\\_final\\_22\\_May\\_FINAL-2.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf)). GB was signed by all most all UN agencies, INGO networks, IFRCs and others. In the light of ongoing WHS discourse INGOs have had a different process called Charter for Change (C4C, <https://charter4change.org/>) during 2015, until now this C4C have signed by around 50 INGOs and endorsed by around 150 Southern national and local organization.

There are bangla literature on WHS process is available in the link.... On GB in this link... and on C4C in this link..... ICVA has a good manual on understanding in this regard, please find this in this link, <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/grand-bargain-explained-icva-briefing-paper-march-2017>.

In fact these three commitment is being considered as moral covenant for localization of humanitarian and development assistance. Primarily these are, primacy of the local organization and local leadership, accountability to the local level, transparency and continuous try out for reducing transaction cost, coordination among the agencies, and commitment to the institutional development of the local organization with multiyear funding. This is the first time localization has been outlined in 10 streams and with 51 measurable indicators.

##### **6. UN commitment on NWoW for collective effort toward sustainability and accountability.**

During WHS major UN agencies has signed an agreement on New of Way of Working (NWoW), in fact which is to work with all other actors for sustainability and best utilization of all available resources and capacities. In the same spirit UN general assembly adopted the resolution of QCPR (Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review) during December 2016 in resolution 71/243 especially guiding whole UN system toward in collective approach and with local accountability to achieve agenda 2030. Please find an easy reading manual for NGOs on this NWoW in following link, <https://www.icvanetwork.org/topic-five-%E2%80%93-new-way-working-what-it-what-does-it-mean-ngos>.

As Mr. Anotnie Guterres the UN Secretary General said “We must bring the humanitarian and development sphere closer together from the very beginning of a crisis to support affected communities, address structural and economic impacts and help prevent a new spiral of fragility and instability. The approach relates to the New Way of Working agreed in World Humanitarian Summit. To achieve this, we need more accountability, on the level of each individual agency carrying out its mandate, but also its contribution to the work of United Nations system and of the system as a whole. A strong culture of accountability also require effective and independent evaluation mechanism”.

UN OCHA booklet (2017) on this NWoW ([https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/NWOW%20Booklet%20low%20res.002\\_0.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/NWOW%20Booklet%20low%20res.002_0.pdf)) further said that “The aim of strong national and local ownership of collective outcomes is an integral part of the New Way of Working, shaped by the operational context and comparative advantages of different actors. The shift to “reinforce and do not replace” the roles of national and local actors in the prevention and delivery of assistance was also among the most important outcomes of WHS, and is central to the change in mindset and behavior required to sustainably reduce need, risk and vulnerability.”

UN is somehow a last resort for nations and also for the civil society for getting them as an ally in advocacy to get space, thus it is expected that UN system should also work to create a vibrant civil society / NGO sector. But it is being observed that some of the UN agencies sub contract most of their project to the INGOs. It is happening in Rohingya response where all most more than 60 % fund going through UN agencies. Some UN agencies maintain large operational structure, which is in itself how much help to growth of local NGOs. E.g., since 90's as UN agencies especially UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP working in southern part of Coxsbazar, government hardly allowed local NGOs to work there and thus in respect of different development especially in respect of human development index those upazila (sub – district) has fallen behind even below national index, there are little of CSO / NGO presence in the district of Coxsbazar, e.g., while there are almost 15 NGOAB (NGO Affairs Bureau) registered local NGO available in Kurigram district, in Coxsbazar district it is only around 7. UN agencies are also being criticize for high level of dependency on expatriates and logistical operation while in GB they have committed for a coordinated and for a common logistical pool. We need to do advocacy in this regard, UN system should also ensure local level accountability and transparency, limit its field operation thus thereby facilitating with a targeted policy for sovereign, sustainable and accountable growth of local level civil society.

##### **7. What is the situation in Bangladesh: demand side mobilization**

We need to remember that all these above global commitments are moral obligation, supply side from top level. Unless there are mobilization from demand side i.e., from local and national level there will be little of implementation and again fall back to the square one, e.g., all though there was declaration of PoP during 2007 there was little follow up on this even from the organizers.

Likewise while Bangladeshi CSO / NGOs have had participated in this all international discourse along with mobilization from national level, during 2016 to 2018 there are initiative in Bangladesh in respect of demand side. COAST along with others

including the informal help from the leadership of BAPA, ADAB, CDF and FNB we did orientation in all the division and at present which are going on in 24 districts. There were group discussion in each divisional and district workshop based on all these international covenants what should be our charter of accountability toward public, what should be our charter of expectations from the donors, INGOs and governments. Now we have plan to declare those charters tentatively on 6<sup>th</sup> July in a national level conference of CSO/NGOs.

Apart from this during first and second half of 2017 there was several meetings and group discussion among 50 CSO/NGOs and we have developed a charter of expectations (<http://coastbd.net/our-common-space-our-complementary-roles-equitable-partnership-for-sovereign-and-accountable-civil-society-growth/> ) with 18 points that has been declared and shared with in a public forum on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017 on the eve of the World Humanitarian Day. There were huge participation of Country Directors of INGOs and UN agencies on that forum the outcome have received huge attention from media too.

We all know about Rohingya influx during August 2017. We have taken Rohingya influx as a laboratory for campaign in this regard through CCFNF (Coxsbar CSO NGO Forum, [www.cxb-cso-ngo.org](http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org)). We have organized short studies and campaign events including all the stakeholders including government, UN agencies and INGOs (International Non-Government Organizations).

There were huge national and international media coverage of our campaign events, these information are available in both [www.coastbd.net](http://www.coastbd.net) and [www.cxb-cso-ngo.org](http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org). As a result of continuous and persistence campaign from local to international level, during September 2018 there was field mission of Grand Bargain localization stream, they have visited field and discuss with a lot of stakeholders, and they have suggested to do localization of total Rohingya response by next three years. Please see the 26 recommendations from the mission in as attachment in the CCFNF position paper. (<http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/English-CCNF-position-paper-on-JRP-2019-edited.pdf>).

We have received continuous funding and other technical support in this regard from Oxfam ELNHA project, but for organizing events in Coxsbar we have received part of funding from IoM (International Office of Monitoring), Christian Aid and ACF.

## 8. The realizations in behind for this (bd - coordination) process

So, taking all these international discourse as opportunity for Bangladeshi CSO/NGOs to grow with sovereign, accountable and sustainable as 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, now we have realized following constraints.

(a) **Important stakeholders like UN agencies and INGOs in principle agreed for localization but in practice there are hardly any operational policies and practices in country level.** Dominant role of those agencies in fact **defeat the spirit of their new transformative role as facilitator to local CSO/NGOs to take lead.** There are a major tend to finger the so called capacity deficit rather than capacity

convergence. They focus risk while their principles argue to take risk in this regard. Please see another one report in this regard produce by Interaction with the support of USAID with the support of NGO consortium of CARE, Concern Worldwide, Danish Refugee Council, Mercy Corps, NRC, Save the Children, and World Vision, the report title “NGO & Risk: Managing Risk in Uncertainty in Local – International Partnership, Good Practice and Recommendations for Humanitarian Actors” argued for sharing risk in partnership. ([http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/riskii\\_partnerships\\_recommendations-1.pdf](http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/riskii_partnerships_recommendations-1.pdf) )

- (b) There are two approach of localization, one is through “capacity development” ( please see an INGO consortium report in this link, <http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org/2019/03/16/accelerating-localisation-through-partnerships/>) and another one through “equal partnership” ( Please see a study report done by an International Research Group in this regard where the real partnership situation reflected, <http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org/2019/03/26/localisation-in-vanuatu-demonstrating-change-january-2019/> ). **Southern local NGOs including Bangladeshi NGOs, we give emphasize on partnership which should be equal rather than on sub-contracting or with subordination relation.** There are debate on in respect of capacity, considering the difference in social perspective. Moreover it seems that it is a never ending issue, INGOs and UN agencies go one after one capacity projects but hardly come with equality in partnership.
- (c) UN agencies and INGOs have their own collective voice. **But as because of different reasons, we the local and national NGOs has fragmentations. Some of UN agencies and INGOs asked about legitimacy whether we have any institutional framework of unity,** all though we have a very informal relations with all the big networks and coordination especially in field level.
- (d) Whenever there are any crisis or the situation like shrinking space by any government decisions, **INGOs goes together and negotiate with government, but we the local CSO/NGOs hardly able to go or take common position to negotiate.** We consider that some time international, national and local NGOs should go together. These has created worse situation in the bureaucracy especially in local level, there are minimum respect to the local CSO/NGOs and they are the victim of rampant corruptions too.
- (e) There are unhealthy competition among the local CSO/NGOs too for getting projects whether it is from government, UN agencies and INGOs. And as because of this, there are some ill practices, like **some of them hardly give overhead ( Please find one international research in this regard in following link <http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/UROC.pdf> ) , management cost and institutional development effort, although they have declared commitment in international level. Even they asked for contribution,** while local CSO/NGOs especially who do not have such micro finance or other social business program. These situation creates a burden among local CSO/NGOs to grow, create unhealthy competition and as well compel for corruption too.

These have happened also because of the fact that, majority of the UN agencies and INGOs **hardly have any partnership policy which is criteria based, targeted milestone based especially aiming for sustainable sovereign and accountable local CSO/NGO building in long run. The policy have to be transparent and competitive in practice, and which should also be free from conflict of interest in implementation.**

- (f) There are a research report which is yet to make public, in last two years, funding to the INGOs in Bangladesh has gone up while funding to the local CSO/NGOs has gone down. **Now most of the INGOs is raising fund in local level**, e.g., they are raising fund from UNHCR and UNICEF in competing with local NGOs in Rohingya response but in principle they should bring fund from their own original countries. Please see the report in following link where international study group found in Rohingya response that major funding is going through the UN agencies and INGOs ([https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/HH\\_Practice-Paper-1\\_Rohingya\\_FINAL\\_Electronic\\_180618.pdf](https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/HH_Practice-Paper-1_Rohingya_FINAL_Electronic_180618.pdf) ) **Some of the INGOs going for so called localization, creating their own board in Bangladesh, but in practice they are part of their federated structure and following all the international rules.** In fact these are sort of obstruction to the local CSO/NGOs to grow and it is a mis-interpretation to their commitment in GB and C4C.
- (g) There are **two vivid opportunities for local CSO/NGOs to get local funding**, e.g., (i) we have some mid and big MFIs (Micro Finance Institutions) and NGOs who can fund and develop local CSO/NGOs especially in respect of right based approach, (ii) there are growing corporate funding within the country too, local NGO/CSOs can coordinate themselves and negotiate that such fund should go for local CSO/NGOs.
- (h) Staff poaching is rampant from local CSO/NGOs, in fact it is the local NGOs develop the staff and the investment in fact goes to INGOs and UN agency's benefit as they poached the staff and utilize them. (Please see a report from an INGO consortium in this link, <https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/41149/466719/version/5/file/Time%20for%20HR%20to%20Step%20Up.pdf>). C4C have pleaded a compensation for local NGOs in this regard. It has happened as because INGOs maintain high level of salary and other benefit structure which in reality they do not give it to the local NGOs while they do partnership projects. Salary enhancement by INGOs and UN agencies in Rohingya Response have had happened in so rampant manner, it is gone in a level that which is in doubt that whether it will be maintainable. Local NGOs in Coxsbazar lost their 20 to 30 % staff to whom they have

invested for more than one decades. **So, there should be common (for all including International, National, Local NGOs and UN agencies too) salary frame work and there should be some common ethical recruitment policy too for all so that there will be stable human resources for sustainable local CSO/NGO sector in Bangladesh.**

- (i) **In fact due to the "Facilitating Approach" of the INGOs, and their expatriate and national staff there are a number of successful CSO / NGOs have developed in Bangladesh. But it is being observed that now they are more inclined with "Operational Approach" which in fact defeating the spirit of their facilitating role to the local leadership, and thus continuously making the local CSO/NGOs depended.** Expatriate engagement is happening which is more supply driven rather than demand driven, we have experienced these symptoms especially in Rohingya response.

#### 9. **Need of a sector wide Coordination Process and its objectives**

So taking this in above discourses and to negotiate the appropriate implementation in mitigating above constraints, based on which primarily to facilitate a sovereign, sustainable and accountable local CSO/NGOs sector development in Bangladesh, which is not only needed for humanitarianism and development but also for democracy and justice with positive engagement with government. Here we need a greater and sector wise unity which could be done with minimum coordination without undermining individual network entity of already existing major networks.

Name of the platform could be "**Bangladesh CSO/NGO Coordination Process**" in acronym "bd- coordination". **Vision of the network should be "Sovereign sustainable and accountable local CSO / NGO sector which is vibrant and proactive as a sector along with positive engagement and equal partnership with state and market / private sector for humanitarianism and development "**. As mission or objectives of the platform could be as follows.

- (a) To promote **informal coordination and negotiation** for the greater CSO/NGO sectoral development and to take **minimum commonly agreed position** in this regard especially with the **major actors in local CSO/NGO sector**.
- (b) To **negotiate with government, INGOs, UN agencies and donors to encourage them to take appropriate and progressive facilitating role** of in view of PoP, GB and C4Cs and to establish primacy of the role of local CSO/NGOs and thereby local leadership.
- (c) To promote **positive engagement with the government** in all level.