



Bangladesh

Statement under Agenda Item 73: *Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations, including Special Economic Assistance at the 72nd Session of the General Assembly on Friday, 8th December 2017*

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is currently experiencing one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes of recent times with the influx of nearly 630,000 people, mostly Rohingya, from Myanmar's Rakhine State. There are reports on ongoing arson in central and northern parts of Rakhine State, and 10-400 people still pouring into Bangladesh on a daily basis. The relevant UN entities, along with their NGO partners are fighting a race against time to support our national and local government authorities to cope with the severe strain on available services, arrangements and resources.

Some of the figures regularly updated by the Inter-sector Coordination Group can be quite telling about the enormity of the challenge. According to the latest update, over 600,000 people have been reached so far with site management assistance, 650,973 people have gained access to basic sanitation, 323,940 children have been administered measles and rubella vaccination, 10,893 children have been admitted to blanket supplementary feeding programmes, 124,00 households have received a minimum of two sleeping mats, 10,605 adolescent boys and girls have received life skill sessions, and 1,544 teachers have been recruited so far. The newly arrived population is entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance for food and other basic life-saving needs. The spontaneously developed settlements face over-congestion, which is barely mitigated by the allocation of 3,000 acres of land by the Government in a particular area.

We urge donor countries and organisations to respond to the pressing and increasing need for resources identified by the concerned humanitarian actors, in the spirit of responsibility and burden sharing. We reiterate our appreciation for humanitarian assistance provided so far, and pledges made in response to the UN's revised response plan to the tune of USD 434 million for the first six-month period. We thank the EU and Kuwait for convening the high-level Pledging Conference in Geneva on 23 October 2017.

While our Government continues to engage with the Myanmar authorities in good faith to facilitate the return of the displaced people, it remains incumbent on the international community to work together with Myanmar to create an environment for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of the Rohingya to their homes without fear of reprisals and continued discrimination. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted earlier this week, ““The world cannot countenance a hasty window-dressing of these shocking atrocities, bundling people back to conditions of severe discrimination and latent violence which seem certain to lead in the future to further suffering, and more movements of people.” There is no way the world can afford to relegate the Rohingya crisis to yet another forgotten emergency as we regrettably tend to notice in some other cases.

It is also critical that the Rohingya receive humanitarian assistance without any discrimination in the northern Rakhine State and other parts. We underscore yet again that there can be no pretext for breach of international humanitarian law under the guise of counter-terrorist operations. Although the World Food Programme has been allowed to resume operations to a limited extent, it is reported that such access has not been unfettered as called for by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

It is evident that the still unfolding humanitarian crisis of the Rohingya cannot be resolved without a peaceful, just and lasting political solution to the root causes of their disenfranchisement and displacement. The UN and its Member States have rallied behind the roadmap outlined in the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission’s report that we believe can create a real difference in the situation on the ground. It remains critical that those recommendations are considered for implementation by all concerned actors in Myanmar without resorting to a selective approach. In order to build trust and confidence among the Rohingya, it is imperative that those responsible for committing horrific crimes against the Rohingya are duly identified and brought to justice.

We stress that Bangladesh can bilaterally address only perhaps the issue of possible voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya to Myanmar, but all related larger questions and issues would have to be addressed by Myanmar with the international community’s continued support and monitoring on behalf of the Rohingya. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had this pertinent question to ask all of us, and I quote, “The Rohingya have been physically attacked, oppressed, deprived of nationality and rights. How much do people have to endure before their suffering is acknowledged and their identity and rights are recognised, by their government and by the world?”

Mr. President,

In general, Bangladesh attaches great importance to the UN’s humanitarian and emergency relief assistance, and remains supportive of international efforts to help build resilient societies

and nations to respond to humanitarian challenges. We unequivocally condemn the indiscriminate armed attacks against humanitarian personnel and convoy, medical and peacekeeping personnel and civilian infrastructures essential for humanitarian operations. We urge all parties to conflicts to refrain from such egregious attacks, blockades and impediments in conformity with the International Humanitarian Law.

In conclusion, we thank all facilitators for their diligent work on the draft resolutions that our delegation is pleased to support.

I thank you.