

**Virtual Donor Conference on 'Sustaining Support for the
Rohingya Refugee Response' 22.10.2020**

**Speech by Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade of Finland,
Mr. Skinnari**

It is my great pleasure to be together with you in this important pledging conference. I would especially like to thank Secretary of State Pompeo, High Representative Borrell, Minister of State Baron Ahmad and High Commissioner Grandi for their leadership on this important issue.

We share the deep concern regarding the situation of the Rohingya refugees, as expressed by many speakers today. The grave humanitarian emergency has only been escalating due to the Covid pandemic.

Most of the Rohingya refugees are women and children. The extremely vulnerable situation of women and girls deserves particular attention and strong efforts to improve their situation.

We must ensure their sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as work against gender-based violence.

Three in four Rohingya children are estimated to be out of school. Finding a solution to their situation is key to a better future for them.

We must also pay more attention, and assist better, people with disabilities.

Finland has allocated annual humanitarian aid to support Rohingyas to rebuild their lives since 2017, and we are ready to continue.

This year, we have channeled close to 1 million euros to the Rohingya response through Finnish NGOs. Finland also provides support through the European Union, UN Organizations and the Central Emergency Response Fund.

I am pleased to announce that today **Finland will pledge 2 million euros** through the UNHCR in additional humanitarian assistance to support the Rohingyas.

Our funding allows partners in the field to continue their vital work. At the same time, we must accelerate our efforts to find sustainable peace and to promote human rights in the region.

I would like to commend the generosity of Bangladesh in the continuing humanitarian effort to relieve the situation of Rohingya refugees. I had a visit planned to Bangladesh in March, but unfortunately, it had to be postponed due to the pandemic. I look forward to a visit as soon as circumstances allow.

I also acknowledge the incredible work done by all the humanitarian organizations in the field, especially now during the pandemic.

Finally, I wish to reiterate our support to the Rohingya and all communities touched by the crisis.

Thank you.
