

Kuala Lumpur, 22 October 2020

[Madam/Mr Chairman]

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to this Conference.

Driven by the humanitarian imperative, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from across the globe have come together in solidarity with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society to provide essential humanitarian assistance and protection in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Since 2017, we have supported more than 260,000 people from the displaced and host communities. This has addressed a wide range of urgent needs – including the provision of vital health services to tens of thousands of people. As always, our support – including our protection activities - focuses on the most vulnerable: including children, single mothers, older people, and those with disabilities.

We have seen the additional crisis of COVID-19 reach the camps and host communities. We have invested in and increased our focus on COVID-19 preparedness and support, including through opening two new isolation field hospitals.

Cyclones and monsoon rains also create major additional threats, and we have played a strong role in disaster risk reduction and preparedness; including supporting the Government of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society to expand the Cyclone Preparedness Programme to all 860,000 people in the camps and in host communities. This has included training camp volunteers as first responders.

[Madam/Mr Chairman]

We are also active in support of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across the region.

Recently, we have allocated relief funds to support Palang Merah Indonesia (or the Indonesian Red Cross) to assist and protect the individuals and families who have arrived via boat in North Aceh.

In Myanmar, we are supporting the local humanitarian efforts of Myanmar Red Cross, to reach all affected communities in Rakhine

State with vital health and livelihoods support; localised disaster risk reduction initiatives; and support to access water and safe sanitation. Recently, this support has incorporated a dedicated response to the concerning increase in COVID-19 in the State.

We also note that the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission continue to provide a relevant framework for the reformative measures required in Rakhine State, including addressing socio-economic needs of all communities.

[Madam/Mr Chairman]

More than three years on, this is now becoming a protracted crisis.

As the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we reiterate our commitment to assist and protect those most vulnerable in this crisis; and to uphold the safety and dignity of all individuals in need. We do this through our collective support to National Societies, who are local humanitarian actors, working on the basis of our fundamental principles, and who maintain a longer term and permanent presence in affected communities. Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, for example, has been active in supporting communities in the camps of Cox's Bazar since the late 1970s and early 1990s.

Yet, the resources required to reach those in need are significant, and we are concerned that without financial commitments this crisis will escalate even further.

With this message we would like to appeal to the donor community to support the prolonged humanitarian crisis and growing needs in the Cox's Bazar, and across the region. This includes support for the additional threats and crises faced by displaced and host communities – including natural hazards and disasters, and the threat of COVID-19.

Thank you for your attention.
