

Statement Switzerland (BEU)
Virtual Donor Conference on Sustaining Support for the Rohingya
Refugee Response (co-hosted by US and UNHCR)
22nd October 2020

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me thank our hosts for organizing this important conference.

The Government and the people of Bangladesh, as well as the international community have done an enormous work to provide basic services to the Rohingya refugees residing in the area of Cox's Bazar. This has led to the improvement of camp conditions and strengthened monsoon preparedness.

Nevertheless, living conditions remain dire, with enduring protection concerns related to safety and security, especially for the most vulnerable groups, such as women and girls.

So far, the various attempts to sustainably repatriate refugees to Myanmar have failed. While the conditions for a sustainable, voluntary, safe and dignified return are still not met, it is important that the two countries continue their collaboration in good faith towards this goal and ensure that the support to the refugees include key elements facilitating their return, such as documentation, education and skills.

Boat movements of Rohingya from Bangladesh, but also from Myanmar are adding up to the suffering and the overall protection concerns of this deeply affected population.

It is therefore very important that the international community continues to work closely and jointly with all countries and stakeholders in the region to find durable solutions for the refugees in Bangladesh and for the remaining Rohingya population in Rakhine state.

Switzerland calls on the Government of Myanmar and on all parties involved in the current conflict in Rakhine, to respect international humanitarian law and to allow unhindered access and emergency aid to the affected populations. We also call the Government, to continue all its crucial

efforts to create a conducive environment for the Rohingya people's sustainable, voluntary, safe and dignified return, as well as sustainable development in Rakhine state, ensuring indiscriminating access to services, the respect for human rights.

In parallel, Switzerland calls on the Government of Bangladesh to maintain humanitarian access to all refugees in the country and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, while improving their access to education, medical care and livelihood opportunities.

Switzerland remains committed to improving the living conditions in the camps by continuing the financial support to multilateral and bilateral partners. Since 2017 Switzerland has contributed over 55 million USD in both Cox's Bazar and Rakhine State.

Switzerland remains equally committed to:

- Fostering the dialogue with all actors around this crisis;
- Promoting durable solutions in Rakhine state in view of the sustainable, voluntary, safe and dignified return of the refugees;
- Supporting the work of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Myanmar;
- Supporting national, regional and international accountability mechanisms.

In conclusion, Switzerland salutes the solidarity demonstrated by the Government and the people of Bangladesh and by the national and international humanitarian actors in facing this enduring crisis. We encourage all parties to continue working together to find durable solutions and ensure the assistance, protection and dignity of the Rohingya and the other affected populations in the respective countries.

Thank you