Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock
Remarks to the Rohingya Pledging Conference
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As delivered

Let me just start by saying I don’t want to replicate anything that Filippo [Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] has said. I want to reinforce on behalf of the whole United Nations everything he said - especially our thanks to the people of Bangladesh and also to you [Saudi Arabia] for bringing us together.

I would like to make some complementary points. The first one is that the United Nations has provided nearly 900,000 refugees a month with food assistance this year; more than 300,000 people got medical assistance; more than 350,000 refugee and host community children got access to learning opportunities. Spending money on this is a good investment and cost effective. And we saw this when we were there together, just a few months ago.

The burden being borne by the host community is insufferable and everybody needs to understand the strain this prolonged crisis is putting on host communities.

We need to be clear-eyed about the realities of the situation, and we must collectively try and support change inside Myanmar, but we also have to continue to support Bangladesh and her people and the refugees. We cannot allow a situation where in ten years’ time we find we have left a generation of Rohingya still in Bangladesh, poorly educated, lacking in skills, and without hope of ever returning to their homes and living complete lives. This would mean not just a collective failure, it would create a serious and damaging situation for the region as a whole. Our successors will regret it if we allow that to happen.

Now we need, therefore, to adopt a wise and far-sighted approach with a stronger focus on helping the refugees not just recover from the trauma they have experienced, but to prepare for a dignified longer-term future.

That also means a stronger support for the response plan we prepared this year. It is an unhappy irony that from a situation of being one of the best-funded plans, it has become so underfunded that I, in the last round of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), had to make an allocation for the Rohingya from the Underfunded Window.
Thank you to those of you who financed the CERF, without which I could not have done that. But it is not a good signal that we have to access those resources in these circumstances. One of the allocations I made is for education because that is a strategic longer-term requirement.

So, thank you again for bringing us together. Thank you even more for addressing or redressing the underfunded situation we face.