



National Launch of 'Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action' in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar

Dhaka

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The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action were jointly launched today in Bangladesh by the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs, the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission, with the support of UNHCR and UNICEF. Today's joint launch represents the concerted efforts amongst all actors to ensure that no child is left behind.

The Minimum Standards – or CPMS – were initially developed by The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action in 2012. The CPMS reflect a consensus on what are considered to be appropriate child protection interventions in humanitarian contexts. They establish basic common principles and help improve the quality of programming; strengthen coordination between actors; and facilitate advocacy and communication efforts on child protection. A new edition was developed a year ago, with the inputs of more than 85 organizations, including UNHCR and UNICEF, though the launch of the standards in Bangladesh was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The revised version makes the CPMS more inclusive and relevant for displacement and refugee contexts. The CPMS includes 10 principles and 28 standards, all of which are being translated to both Bengali and Burmese, making them more accessible for all.

"I would like to reaffirm our Ministry's commitment to provide all sorts of support in our capacity to the stakeholders including different government departments, UNs, I/NGOs, local agencies, Media, for their support, collaboration and effective coordination in designing and implementing various interventions for prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. As a result, the rights of children will be ensured, and they will grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity in Bangladesh," said Dr. Mohiuddin Ahmed, Additional Secretary, Planning, Development and Statistics, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs of Bangladesh.

A number of the more than 100 participants at the virtual launch expressed thanks to the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs as well as the RRRC, Mr. Shah Rezwana Hayat, for their demonstrated commitment to protecting children throughout Bangladesh, including the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya children in the settlements in Cox's Bazar.

Children constitute more than half of the Rohingya refugee population in the camps in Cox's Bazar. These standards underscore the importance of strategic cooperation and are designed to ensure adequate responses to the protection needs of children, including children affected by

violence and displacement, survivors of sexual violence, unaccompanied and separated children, children in child marriages and children at risk of trafficking and abuse, amongst others.

“The Minimum Standards will guide us in assessing and developing specific and effective responses to their protection needs,” said Steven Corliss, the UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh. “From the onset of the most recent Rohingya crisis in August 2017, UNHCR has sought to place refugees at the centre of the response – as actors in their own protection. The updated standards will strengthen the role of refugees. The Minimum Standards have helped us during the COVID-19 emergency to adapt our activities to the new operational reality. The strength and resilience of refugee volunteers has enabled child protection partners to continue providing support and protection through remote management, overcoming the necessary restrictions on our ability go to the camps,” he added.

Specific to the launch in Bangladesh, six standards are being promoted and prioritized by UNICEF and UNHCR including; Information Management, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Community Level Approaches, Health and Child Protection, Mental Health and Psychosocial Distress, and Applying Socio-Ecological approaches to child protection programming.

“Across the world today, one in four children live in a country affected by conflict or disaster. They face daily risks to their physical and mental health which can have devastating and long-lasting effects on their lives. Protecting children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect is not a work of the protection sector only. Given the multi-faceted nature of the risks children face, all sectors must be involved to ensure predictable, swift and well-planned responses. This set of standards supports this idea,” said Tomoo Hozumi, UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh.

Creating a common understanding of child protection needs and responses in the Bangladesh context is a shared responsibility, while both UNHCR and UNICEF will continue to work hand-in-hand with the Government of Bangladesh, to ensure that no child is left behind.

Media Contacts:

UNHCR: Louise Donovan; donovan@unhcr.org; +8801847327279

UNICEF: Faria Selim ; fselim@unicef.org; +8801817586096