

## PRESS RELEASE

### Sweden to support Rohingya refugees with USD 7.6 million



**Cox's Bazar, 15 February:** At the end of a two-days visit to Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh, H.E. Alexandra Berg von Linde, announced her country's latest contribution of SEK 79 million, equivalent to USD 7.6 million for the energy and environment programme of the Rohingya response. The contribution will support the provision of cleaner cooking energy to Rohingya refugees, the continued rehabilitation of ecosystems and the facilitation of enhanced skills development for refugees and Bangladeshi host communities. These activities are part of the Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, phase 2 programme (SAFE+2), a joint UN program which brings together the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the World Food Programme (WFP).

"It has been impressive to see the positive impact that the SAFE+2 programme has had on Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities", said H.E. Alexandra Berg von Linde. "As a substantial amount of forest in the Cox's Bazar area had initially been impacted following the large Rohingya influx in 2017, it is good to see that through a programme like SAFE+2, the area around the Cox's Bazar refugee camps has largely been regreened and reforested. The fact that refugees are now cooking with cleaner energy, preserving the forest and their health, and that refugees and Bangladeshi host communities are engaging in skills development and livelihood activities in support of these environmental interventions, is a remarkable achievement. We are glad to contribute to this."

"This contribution from the Government and the people of Sweden will allow us to provide some 190,000 refugee households with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). This cleaner cooking fuel improves refugees' wellbeing and living conditions, as it reduces smoke inhalation and prevents gender-based violence and other protection risks related to the collection of firewood from forests," said Johannes van der Klaauw, speaking as the representative of the convening agency. "It will allow for a successful rehabilitation of the environment and ecosystems of the area and substantially reduce CO2 emissions," added UNHCR's Representative in Bangladesh.

The distribution of LPG and fuel-efficient cooking equipment enables an energy transition away from firewood and associated deforestation. The programme, including through its phase 1 component, has so far prevented the emission of over 400,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The programme's impact is enhanced through replanting, reforestation, and the improvement of watersheds. The joint programme also supports the resilience of vulnerable refugees and host communities, through skills development projects related to environmental improvements and agriculture.

Sweden has supported the SAFE+ programme since it was first initiated in 2019 and then led by IOM. SAFE+2 was launched as a joint UN programme in July 2022, building on the successes and learnings from the first phase. The second phase of the programme is currently supported by the Governments of Sweden and Canada.

As it has been close to six years since over 700,000 Rohingya refugees were forced to flee violence and persecution in Myanmar, the Rohingya situation in Bangladesh is now officially considered a protracted refugee situation. Currently some 920,000 Rohingya refugees remain hosted in densely populated camps in the Cox's Bazar area, with an additional 30,000 refugees living on Bhasan Char.

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*[For more information please contact:](#)*

**UNHCR: Mostafa Mohammad Sazzad Hossain, +880 1313 046 459; [hossaimo@unhcr.org](mailto:hossaimo@unhcr.org)**

**Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka: Alim Bari, +880 1709 654 196; [alim.bari@gov.se](mailto:alim.bari@gov.se)**