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**PLACE: Cox's Bazar**

**DATE: 28/12/2020**

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### **UNHCR provides Liquefied Petroleum Gas and training on safe use to vulnerable Bangladeshi families in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar**

Today, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, in close collaboration with the UNO of Ukhiya Sub-District Mr. Nizam Uddin Ahmed and partner Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), provided liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) canisters and stoves to more than 5,770 vulnerable local Bangladeshi families. All families will also receive training on the safe use of LPG for cooking in the home.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, host communities were severely impacted. Employment and livelihoods opportunities were disrupted increasing vulnerabilities across the District.

In 2018 UNHCR began the distribution of LPG to Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar in an effort to reduce deforestation. This programme, in collaboration with International Organization for Migration (IOM), was further expanded in 2019 to include the most vulnerable Bangladeshi host community families in the Ukhiya and Teknaf Sub-Districts.

"We appreciate the generosity of UNHCR and its partner BDRCS for their continuous support to the local community, especially those affected by the influx. Environment is one of our priorities and this initiative to provide LPG and stoves is a remarkable step", said Mr. Nizam Uddin Ahmed, the UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) of Ukhiya sub-district at today's event in Ukhiya.

To date, some 46,000 Bangladeshi families have received LPG and stoves. A recent study by UNHCR and partner IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) showed that the overall market demand for firewood in Ukhiya sub-district has dropped by a remarkable 92%. Thanks to this intervention, the rate of LPG use in the host community has increased from just 7% to 20%, resulting in a 53% reduction in the demand of firewood among them. The combined target is to reach 71,000 host community households.

Furthermore, due to the availability of LPG dealers nearby, more and more of the local community also started using LPG for cooking at homes and in restaurants. This will bring long term benefits to the local community and the environment, as alternative energy sources become more accessible and affordable.

LPG support is supplemented by cash support for the most vulnerable which is being provided by UNHCR, while over 30,000 local Bangladeshi families benefitted from this support in 2020 alone.

"UNHCR is committed to supporting the Government of Bangladesh environmental and energy security targets by supporting the transition to cleaner fuels like LPG. By distributing LPG to the host communities adjacent to the camps, UNHCR is meeting its commitment to supporting local communities and easing fuel poverty", said Charles Campbell, UNHCR Senior Field/Technical Coordinator in Cox's Bazar.

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# PRESS RELEASE

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