Humanitarian protection is about improving safety, well-being and dignity for crisis-affected populations. Protection refers not only to what we do, but also the way we do it. These principles include:

- Do not cause further harm or create new risk of harm
- Non-discriminatory access to assistance and services
- Identify the most vulnerable and their specific needs
- Safe and dignified access to basic services
- Community participation and empowerment
- Strengthen positive community protection capacities

Humanitarian protection also includes being aware of specific protection issues that arise in disasters and emergencies, but do not fall within a particular sectoral or organisational mandate or capacity. These issues require information-sharing, advocacy or referral to specialized actors for appropriate response. Such issues include:

- Child protection concerns (e.g. identifying and assisting separated and unaccompanied children);
- Gender-based violence;
- Sexual exploitation and abuse; and
- Protection of people with disabilities (e.g. physical, neurological or mental); people displaced by disaster; and other vulnerable groups.

Protection problems may include discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation, deliberate deprivation or neglect of vulnerable individuals or groups (e.g. religious and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, women, children, youth, older people and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics - SOGIESC) within the affected population. Some of these issues may have existed in the community before the disaster, and may increase with the shock and stress of the disaster. Others may arise due to humanitarian assistance and the way in which emergency relief activities are designed and delivered (e.g. inappropriate, inaccessible or unfair distributions).

Disasters affect people differently based on their age, gender, disability and many other factors. Vulnerable individuals or groups face different risks and barriers to accessing assistance and services before, during and after a disaster. These diverse needs should be reflected in assessments and response actions across all sectors.

Note that “gender-based violence (GBV) is happening everywhere. It is under-reported worldwide, due to fears of stigma or retaliation, limited availability or accessibility of trusted service providers, impunity for perpetrators and lack of awareness of the benefits of seeking care. All humanitarian personnel ought to assume GBV is occurring and threatening affected populations; treat it as a serious and life-threatening problem; and take actions ... regardless of the presence or absence of concrete ‘evidence’” as per the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2015) Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action.

Below is a non-exhaustive list providing initial guidance in supporting protection-oriented relief and recovery activities.

**General Protection Considerations for Logistics**

- Identify which government agencies and other national actors are responsible for the provision of logistics services and take steps to work together with the responsible government authority or authorities to ensure protection considerations for implementing staff and beneficiaries.
- Ensure all staff are aware of and trained on a Humanitarian Code of Conduct (e.g. Fiji Government Humanitarian Code of Conduct following Tropical Cyclone Winston) that addresses child protection and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

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1. A Protection Mainstreaming Tool for Emergency Response in the Pacific Region drawing on Global Protection Cluster Essential Protection Guidance and Tools. For more information contact pacificprotectioncluster@gmail.com or +679 3301 178 (UN Women, PHPC lead agency).
2. Updated from the PHPC Think Protection! A Quick Guide to Integrating Protection into Disaster Response in the Pacific Region 2012.
Protection Considerations for Emergency Assessments Inclusive of the Affected Population

- Analyze the composition of the affected population in detail, ensuring the population and household composition is disaggregated by sex and age. Include the number of single-headed households disaggregated by woman, girl, boy, man head of household; pregnant or lactating women; unaccompanied girls and boys; elderly women and men; people of diverse SOGIESC; women, children and men with disabilities (disaggregated by type of impairment); and women, children and men with serious or chronic illness.

- Consider all displaced people in the assessment including those in temporary settlements, those dispersed in smaller groups and those living with host families.

- Identify existing coping strategies adopted by the affected population to respond to the disaster and prevent further harm (i.e. positive and negative coping strategies).

- Based on the above information, sectoral staff should consider what arrangements are needed for females and for males with specific needs (such as those in the population groups listed above) to ensure that they are able to access humanitarian assistance or services in safety with dignity, including consideration of privacy or mobility issues.

- Ensure host communities are included in assessments to avoid tensions arising between displaced people and host communities in terms of assistance provided (or not provided).

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