




GLOBAL PROTECTION CONFERENCE REPORT 2023

08 – 12 May 2023 Amman, Jordan




The Global Protection Conference was held in Amman, Jordan from 8-12 May 2023 and was attended by 200 participants from across the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), including national and subnational country cluster coordinators, co-coordinators, information management officers (IMO) and support staff, as well as regional colleagues and external stakeholders. The first three days of the Conference were dedicated to facilitate knowledge and peer-to-peer exchange between operations and country coordination teams, across protection and its areas of responsibility (AORs), engaging and exchanging on a range of thematic and technical protection priorities, developments, and standards. Key issues included the matching operational realities with cluster operational capacities, minimum requirements, emerging trends and needs at country level and how colleagues from protection and AoRs can better work together while recognizing and leveraging our specialisation and diversity. The final two days of the Conference brought together keynote speakers, global partners, donors and external stakeholders with the cluster coordination teams, to discuss key directions and priorities such as, shaping the future of protection coordination, centrality of protection in humanitarian responses, optimizing the protection architecture and best practices across a range of thematic issues.

DAY 1: MONDAY, 8 MAY

Setting the Global Scene by GPC and AoR Coordinators

The 2023 Conference opened with the GPC and AoR coordinators sharing key trends and highlights on the 'global scene' that shape the work of country-level protection clusters and AoRs. Global Coordinators also highlighted the ongoing changes and current global debates likely to shape the future of the GPC, particularly the findings of the [Independent Review of the Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy](#), the independent review of the humanitarian response to internal displacement, and the [ERC Flagship initiative](#). Some overarching reflections focused on where protection is leading us in an era of unprecedented and still



growing needs globally, whether our methods speak to the core of humanitarian crises, whether we are in tune with and adapting to our operational environment including on access and frontline engagement, and whether we are raising our protection voice and able to speak with one voice while acknowledging our diversity and specialisation. They also shared framing questions for reflection by participants throughout the week, including: a) Is our protection narrative leading us to respond coherently to the core of humanitarian crises today; b) How can we more effectively use our protection voice together? c) What would it take for a protection response to be tailored to context, driven by and accountable to affected populations; and d) How do we meaningfully advance localization jointly and within the Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility?



Working Together: Learning and Building

Following an interactive session dedicated to participants getting to reconnect and getting to know each other after three years of absence from an in-person global conference, the afternoon focused on exchanges and reflections on how to work better together and collaborate around key cluster functions. Group work focused on: a) developing models of collaboration around fundraising, including CERF and country-based pooled funds, with the aim of resource mobilization for the cluster and cluster partners; b) Actions needed to better leverage Cluster Lead Agencies (CLA) and make strategic use of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for advancing protection; c) Further strengthening effective advocacy through collaboration; d) Advancing localization; and; e) Key directions in collaborating around needs assessment and response planning.

Reflections from participants on Day 1:

- Protection is not prioritized enough in the system. Protection activities still often not seen as life-saving; priority increasingly given to food security, nutrition, health, WASH

- How to rally our Cluster/AoRs lead agencies in support of protection, including through regular meetings between the Cluster/AoRs lead agencies on protection
- Need to better show achievements and impact of protection interventions (rather than focusing on risks, problems and challenges)
- Become better enablers (rather than challenges) for other sectors to better deliver protective services
- Challenges of balancing the need to promote Centrality of Protection and to emphasize the needs for specialized/dedicated Protection response and services (not just mainstreaming)
- Need joint global flagship campaign on Protection, taking inspiration from GBV & CP experience (No Child Left Behind; 16 Days of Activism) or Education's "Education cannot wait"
- Create joint Community of Practice and opportunities for exchange and learning across PC/AoRs
- Where possible develop joint tools, guides, and resources on priority issues of common interest and accessible to AoR/PC has teams and partner through more regular, sustained, and mutual engagement and communication between PC & AoRs
- Have a clear workplan between PC & AoRs on joint/common priorities, including joint advocacy messages and engagement with donors to increase funding (particularly to local actors)
- Foster and encourage collective/joint efforts on needs assessments, quality data and information collection and analysis, as well as on learning and capacity strengthening
- As protection actors, we need to get better at proactively engaging with development and peace actors, and shaping intersectoral efforts on the Nexus to ensure the centrality of protection in such collective endeavours. For example, HLP is a golden thread throughout every aspect of the Nexus.



DAY 2: TUESDAY, 9 MAY

Service Mapping, Referrals & Case Management

The second day of the Conference focused on discussions related to service mapping, referrals, and case management, which constitute key pillars of field protection response and coordination. The session aimed at enhancing understanding of what protection actors do in their respective areas of case management and the critical coordination questions and challenges (what should be coordinated across cluster & AoRs, and what should be done separately), as well as technical issues of common interest (what common/collective standards and good practices are applicable to referral pathways and case management, what are standards specific to AoRs, what are the roles of non-protection actors). Exchanges focused on building better mutual understanding of respective approaches to service mapping, referrals and case management, clarifying effective ways of working across the Protection Cluster and AoRs, and enhancing our understanding what and how we can better work together, including to increase effectiveness and synergies where possible and appropriate, and what should remain the purview of specific sectors/AoRs.



Reflections from participants on Day 2:

- Produce a brief overview and comparative analysis of PC & AoR respective methodologies and ways of working on service mapping, referrals, and case management based on presentations made during the Conference highlighting both common principles and approaches and respective specificities to serve as a basis for SOP clarifying what to do together and separately (e.g. case conferencing), as well as clarifying the roles of non-protection actors, and to enhance collaboration between field PC and AoRs and effectiveness of the collective response
- Consider SOPs to provide menu of options for operations to inform contextualisation of ways of working to operational reality
- Key issues and concern for field Protection Clusters include the need to clarify relations and ways of working with AoRs, engagement with CLA and humanitarian leadership, staffing (lack thereof), increasing politization of operational contexts, and the need to strengthen mechanisms for collective Protection monitoring and analysis, and enhance 5W and M&E of response



DAYS 2-3: TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY, 9-10 MAY

GPC and AoR Dedicated Sessions

On Days 2 and 3 the GPC and global AoRs met with their country level counterparts for a series of specific sessions on a variety of topics.

Protection

The Protection Cluster-specific sessions included dedicated country briefings and discussions on opportunities and challenges in respective operations, as well as dedicated thematic break-out groups on advocacy, learning & development, protection monitoring, proactive protection, and protection of civilians (PoC). In addition, participants engaged in a Q&A with the Global Protection Cluster Coordinator as well as a strategic exercise on how to build a better protection response strategy for the future, including through revised Humanitarian Response Plan and concept of operations planning modalities. Key takeaways include the need to provide clear and practical guidance and tools on key issues, particularly 5W, response monitoring, strategic planning, better engaging and leveraging the Cluster lead agency – particularly vis-à-vis the Humanitarian Country Team, the role of the protection cluster in promoting the Centrality of Protection in humanitarian response, and the Nexus. Good practices were shared by field operations, and will serve as basis for further engagement and learning between GPC and country-level clusters.



Child Protection AoR

The Child Protection AoR had close to two days for a retreat of the CP coordination team, which included coordinators, co-coordinators, IMOs and staff of the Global CP AoR team. The retreat covered topics like the role of Coordinators in Information Management, the Humanitarian Programme Cycle processes, integrating localization in the HPC, preparedness & anticipatory action, and the support available from the Global CP AoR. The participants also shared reflections on Optimization of Protection in preparation for the session on Friday morning (“Optimizing our Protection Architecture”). In addition, separate sessions were held with the GBV and Mine Action AoRs looking at areas in which collaboration could be strengthened (action points on the joint GBV-



CP AoR meeting are mentioned below under GBV). Action points included identifying areas on which we can work together as PC and AoRs and which require specialization and thus be done separately; getting clarity on what the non-AOR protection response consists of; developing a bank of best/good practices on localization; and defining the CP AoR role in preparedness & Anticipatory Action.

Gender-Based Violence AoR

The GBV AoR had 2 specific days for the GBV coordination teams, to provide a peer-to-peer exchange and sharing space, discuss the capacity strengthening approaches, identify key actions and synergies to maximize joint impact, and to integrate country-level coordination perspectives into global workstreams. The GBV AoR Capacity Strengthening Strategy (2023-2028) final draft was presented during these sessions, with consultation on the country roll out activities. The GBV Analytical Framework and the Secondary Data Review template and process were also delved into as the newly finalized products. GBV Risk Mitigation was another key topic, which was discussed through a session on “GBV Integration in Food Security and WASH: Roadmap for a Joint Donor Dialogue”.



As ongoing discussions on the localization agenda, and the collaboration between the GBV and CP AoRs, the remaining sessions focused on Participation and Leadership of Women-Led Organizations in GBV AoR at the Country Level, and the joint efforts to roll out the GBV/CP Field Cooperation Framework at the country level. As the action points of the latter, which was held jointly with the CP AoR coordination teams, the participants agreed on joint dissemination plans, capacity strengthening initiatives, resource mobilization and advocacy efforts to foster the collaboration.



Housing, Land and Property AoR

The HLP AoR welcomed colleagues coordinating HLP response in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, alongside global coordinators, the new HLP AOR Information Management Advisor and other colleagues working on HLP with a regional, global focus.

HLP sessions focused on ways of working and how to foster a more fit for purpose community of practice. Together, colleagues explored challenges, drawing on the rich experience in the group to consider effective working in customary and informal contexts; engagement with authorities; advocacy; collaboration with Mine Action AoR, and how to deepen engagement with shelter, camp management and other sectors. Collectively the group analysed the connections and opportunities for more integration of humanitarian based HLP response with development, solutions and peace approaches, essential to better meet the needs of affected populations.

Practical outcomes included finalisation of the HLP AoR workplan for 2023 and 2024, creating a clear plan for the community of practice, drawing on the diverse perspectives, strengths and capacity from across the AOR membership.



Mine Action AoR

The global Mine Action AoR session was an opportunity to discuss key issues, raise a number of challenges, and identify some solutions/recommendations looking at the MA AoR strategy (2022-2024), strengthening its engagement with CP and HLP AoR, setting up victim assistance coordination, enhancing efforts on mine action the nexus and particularly the involvement of the MA AoR in peace operations with PoC mandates, and enhancing localization and community-based approaches in MA operational responses.

DAY 4: THURSDAY, 11 MAY

Keynote Speech and Panel: Shaping the Future of Protection in Humanitarian Action

On Days 4 and 5, the Global Protection Conference invited donors, global partners and other stakeholders to join the global discussions. To kick off the segment, the keynote address was delivered by **Jan Egeland, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council** and former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the time of global humanitarian reforms, including at the inception of the cluster system. Conference participants then engaged in a Q&A with Mr. Egeland, who shared thoughts and reflections on global trends and debates around changes in the



humanitarian architecture and ways of working to better respond to humanitarian crises and support affected populations in the future.

The keynote speech was followed by a keynote panel on the topic “Shaping the Future of Protection in Humanitarian Action” with GPC stakeholders representing protection in the UN (UNHCR), international NGOs (DRC), national NGOs (Right 2 Protect) and non-protection actors (WFP). Questions focused on a 5 to 10 year future timeframe, and included: “As an NGO, how do you see the future of protection in humanitarian action and what role would NGOs play in this future?”, “As a non-protection agency, what would it mean for humanitarian responses to better address protection and what could WFP or other non-protection actors do differently?”, “What should the responsibility to protect mean and what role do you see frontline or national organizations playing in translating this responsibility into action?”, and “How should we measure whether the international community is adequately addressing protection and what role do you see international protection actors playing in the future?”



Thematic Break-Out Sessions

Implementing the COP Benchmarks

During this session the Centrality of Protection benchmarks developed by the IASC task force 1 were presented and discussed. Focus of the discussion was on ensuring that the benchmarks will be actionable for the field, have an impact on the response and the affected population, ensure that humanitarian actors are not prescriptive in the response, and that the benchmarks will provide clarity on roles and responsibilities and increased accountability.



Positioning Protection at the Strategic Level

This session reviewed how to position protection at the strategic level. Some key takeaways were that we need to better support and enable more protective response together with CLA/HCT/other clusters rather than focus on issues, risks and shortcomings of the response; shift from negative to positive narrative on protection’s opportunities and value to overcome resistance at HC/HCT level – particularly when attempting to address sensitive ‘political’ critical issues We need to better show the concrete added-value of Protection to the affected populations and to the whole response. We need to focus more on what is actually at stake,



what is being done and can be done, rather than on risks or concerns and what is not being done. We need to enhance collaboration between Cluster/AoRs and the lead agencies to engage and guide the HC/HCT decision-making toward more protective response.

Making Protection a Priority in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle

This session helped identify recommendations and best practices on developing meaningful and strategic objectives on protection in the HRP, ensuring linkages with the HCT collective approach to protection, and engaging with other clusters to address protection risks in humanitarian programs. Some of those recommendations included developing joint integrated needs & risks assessment tools and analysis – including do no harm/conflict sensitive analysis, better engage cluster lead agencies to get their buy-in and identify cluster champions to lead on and promote integrated services and programmatic approaches, integrated rapid response mechanisms, develop practical tools and best practices of integrating protection in other clusters with relevant indicators for accountability and learning, continue efforts to develop operational frameworks with other clusters to define key opportunities, minimum requirements and best practices to be emulated in field operations.



Engaging Human Rights and Development Actors

This session identified good practices (Philippines, DRC) for engaging effectively with human rights and development actors in order to better respond to the needs and risks faced by crisis-affected populations. A key takeaway is to be proactive in engaging with development in humanitarian actors at the national level. We explored how we might do this more effectively.

Access for Collective Protection Outcomes

In this session, participants shared valuable practices such as Protection Cluster's co-chairing with OCHA of the Access Working Group (South Sudan); OCHA Access Focal point joining Protection Cluster missions (Myanmar); implementing cross-sectoral and joined-up approaches to access, such as utilising WFP trucks in Syria not only for transporting food assistance but also facilitating protection assessments that would otherwise be challenging to conduct; Access Working Group using access tracker to record incidents to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of constraints, assessing the impact on various actors, and incorporating this knowledge into advocacy efforts. Key takeaways included importance of context specific and risk analysis to unpack access constraints and hone-in on protection impacts; conflict analysis/sensitivity;



establishing common redlines/operating principles, donor support through investing in negotiations skills for protection clusters; invest in community-led efforts; diplomacy/influence HCT and global GA/Security Council, ask donors for more flexibility in what's considered "lifesaving" programming in complex environments where non immediate lifesaving activities (e.g. livelihoods programmes) can open access, requests for more guidance/questions around negotiating access with gangs; use of armed escorts; access guidelines; access trends reporting by UN Secretary-General; access impediments monitoring; what can be done when we have no access.

Marketplace Sessions

Explosive ordnance risk education awareness session

During this double session, colleagues from the global Mine Action AoR provided a comprehensive explosive ordnance risk education awareness session to Cluster and AoR coordination team colleagues.

Donors 'speed dating'

During this session, key donors (PRM, ECHO, SDC and FCDO) directly engaged with field cluster and AoR colleagues through small group discussions, sharing ideas, concerns, and recommendations for better supporting protection response in field operations. To support more frank conversation, participants agreed to Chatham House rules. These exchanges were opportunities for cluster and donors to address practice and concrete issues in operations. Most conversation delved into specific issues and provided opportunities for further direct and continued engagement between operations and donors.

Coordination Olympics

The session consisted of team games and challenges around team-work and coordination. The highlight was the classic team-work challenge of constructing the tallest and standing spaghetti tower in Amman.

Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings:

This session focused on presenting the legal aid analysis tools developed as part of the "Legal aid in humanitarian settings" project led by the GPC Task Team on Law and Policy (available in multiple languages [here](#)). It was also an opportunity to discuss with field colleagues how the relevance of the project can be enhanced and field support needs in the area of legal aid can be better met.

Disability Inclusion

The session focused on how to address the protection risks faced by persons with disabilities in humanitarian response. The session focused on the ways to define disability using the rights-based language of the UNCRPD; the barriers hindering the access essential services, and how they vary according to gender, age and diversity; the tools and resources developed by the GPC to support inclusive and comprehensive protection analysis, such as the inclusion matrix and the disability marker; on inclusion of gender, age, and disability in the PAUs; on key actions and recommendations to meet the specific needs and rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian sectors and contexts.

Age Inclusion and Protection Analysis

This session focused on learning about ageing and older people, identifying protection risks specific to older people with and without disabilities, and concluded the session with a



discussion on age inclusion best practices and technical support required to promote an overall inclusive response.

Mental health and self-care

This session provided an overview of mental health support provided by the GBV AoR to the first line responders, as well as its results. This presentation was followed by theoretical discussion and practical experiments on perception of stress, insecurity and disconnection.

Anti-Trafficking

The interactive session on anti-trafficking in crisis contexts equipped participants with the confidence to understand what human trafficking is, who should respond, and how. With global-level demands for humanitarians to do more on trafficking, we challenged participants to form their own protection narrative on what they are already doing, what can be improved, and what requires more funding and more capacity. The examples have been drawn from the GPC Introductory Guidance on Anti-Trafficking Action in IDP contexts and participants' stories from the ground. Armed with a collective understanding, we break into a debate section, where the split group will advocate for or against anti-trafficking action.



DAY 5: FRIDAY, 12 MAY

Optimising our Protection Architecture

The last day of the Conference opened with an overview of the findings of the 2022 *Independent Review of the Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy* and actions taken so far on the optimization the GPC & AoRs architecture and ways of working. It was followed with a series of breakout group frank discussions on existing challenges, but also highlighting many opportunities and good practices to better work together to achieve are collective and respective mandates and objectives by better acknowledging and leveraging our diverse expertise and capacity. The key takeaways of those discussions served at further shaping the recommendations and



action plan developed by UNHCR, in collaboration with the AoR's CLA, to address the Report's findings and recommendations moving forward in light of the broader ongoing processes affecting and shaping the humanitarian system and responses to internal displacement.

Reflections from participants:

- Consider MOU/ToR to clarify roles and ways of working, ensuring regular joint meetings of PC & AoR coordinators, and to institutionalize inclusive, participatory and accountable SAG
- Go to external/interagency/intersectoral meetings together when possible (delegate when necessary) and ensure speaking with one voice on common messages and positions
- Standard induction package for PC & AoR coordinators should be mandatory to better understand who does what across the Protection sub-sectors
- Joint publications to showcase collective achievements and priorities (e.g. PAU)
- Leverage collective capacity on common priorities (needs assessments, training & capacity-building, advocacy)
- Harmonize and streamline key processes – e.g. PiN and severity discussions
- Local voices need to be integrated into regional and global processes
- Find ways to support the local actors on the frontlines, not just as an extension of the international actors and keeping in mind risk transfers



Thematic Break-out Sessions

Protection of Civilians and Civil-Military Engagement for Protection:

During the discussion, participants emphasized the significance of addressing the challenges related to the protection of civilians, especially in contexts where access is hindered due to ongoing conflicts, or areas controlled by Non-State Armed Groups or de facto authorities. They recognized the absence of a unified definition of protection of civilians and sought guidance on how to approach Protection of Civilians (PoC) issues outside of mission settings. Additionally, they discussed the role of protection actors in such situations.

The group underscored the importance of advocating for and supporting principled



engagement with parties in conflict, compelling them to fulfil their obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). They also stressed the need to enhance the capacity of frontline actors in humanitarian negotiation, aiming not only for access but also for improved protection outcomes. Furthermore, it was agreed that PoC-related concerns should be incorporated into collective protection analysis, the Protection Cluster strategy, and the relevant strategies of the Humanitarian Country Team.

The participants acknowledged the significance of engaging actively with UN peace operations, particularly those with specific protection of civilians mandates. They aimed to identify opportunities for synergies and collaboration, especially during mission transitions, to strengthen their collective efforts in enhancing PoC. Additionally, the group recognized the necessity of receiving guidance on supporting the protection of civilians beyond mission settings and after mission withdrawals without a proper transition.

Regarding civil-military coordination, the establishment of working groups involving the Protection Cluster, Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord), and human rights and PoC missions components has proven to be an effective practice in various operations.

While building relationships with military actors may be time-consuming and sensitive, participants agreed that creating structures with institutional memory is crucial. This ensures that sustained engagement with military actors remains robust, even in the face of staff turnover or changing contexts. They also emphasized the importance of early engagement and deployment of UN-CMCoord officers to foster trust and strategize the role of CMCoord within the protection cluster's work. Furthermore, participants called for more training opportunities where CMCoord is integrated to gain a better understanding of the mandates, principles, and operational methods of various actors involved.

Area-based Coordination:

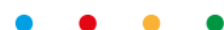
The session aimed to explore the concept of area-based coordination through the sharing of different examples of how protection clusters and AORs are implementing this approach in different contexts (e.g. see good practice from Ukraine). Overall, the session revealed a certain degree of lack of clarity, which may need to be addressed through additional GPC guidance on the subject.

Crisis Response, Contingency Planning & Preparedness:

The session aimed to identify and share good practices in terms of protection cluster contingency planning and preparedness for disasters. There are numerous good practices and the recommendations from the groups included establishing a platform for sharing and keeping an inventory of best practices, ensuring easy access to templates, quick guidance and protection messages for emergencies.

Localisation

The session aimed to identify areas of collaboration between PC and AoRs to continue to support and promote the localisation agenda in the coordination architecture and the response. Recommendations included the need to continue to support quality funding for local and national actors, leveraging Pooled Funds and engaging donors to increase direct funding, the need to better leverage our collective resources to strengthen the capacity of local and national actors across the PC and AoRs (often targeting the same partners), better share learning and further develop, improve and disseminate joint tools, guides, and resources on localisation particularly on governance and decision-making, participation and influence, quality partnerships, institutional capacities, and funding. Localisation is not an end but a



means to ensuring aid is delivered effectively and efficiently. Protection Cluster and the four AoRs will continue partnering with L/NAs in entrenching localisation policies and practices within its sector and wider humanitarian system.

Climate Change, Disasters and Food Security

During this session, colleagues from WFP & the GBV AoR shared achievements and best practices from on-going initiatives in Niger and Colombia (WFP) demonstrating the linkages between conflict and climate, food insecurity and protection risks which helped identify community-led solutions to reduce protection risks through joint/integrated response, and in Mozambique (GBV AoR) on integrating Protection and GBV risk analysis in the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis. Group work during the session also helped identify other best practice and recommendations how Protection Cluster and Food Security actors could better work together to achieve protection outcomes, focusing on joint analysis and advocacy, how protection actors can support food security actors, and vice versa. These contributions and ideas from field colleagues will serve as the basis for on-going collaboration between the GPC and the global food security cluster (gFSc) in 2023 and 2024.

Closing Remarks

The GPC and AOR coordinators closed the Global Protection Conference 2023 by recalling the key points of reflection, highlights and takeaways. The conference closed with a video recap of the week.

