GLOBAL PROTECTION CONFERENCE REPORT

10 - 14 June 2024 I Nairobi, Kenya

The Global Protection Conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya from 10-14 June 2024, was attended by over 200 participants from across the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and its four Areas of Responsibility (AoRs), 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 facilitating knowledge and peer-to-peer exchange between operations and country coordination teams, engaging and exchange on a range of thematic and technical protection priorities, developments, and standards. Key issues included the simplification recommendations of the protection architecture, matching operational realities with cluster operational capacities, minimum requirements, emerging trends and needs at country level and how colleagues from the Cluster and AoRs work together while recognizing and leveraging our specialisation and diversity, and the need to better integrate and optimize resources.

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, 10 June

Opening Remarks by Global Coordinators

Josep Herreros, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator, opened the Conference and welcomed the participants. During his intervention, he reflected on current operational challenges and responses, with 32 active operations in 5 regions, facing critical protection risks in the most challenging contexts ever, facing crises with the most horrendous violations of human rights and the basic humanitarian principles, impediments to access to the persons we work with and for, widespread gender-based violence across different crises, explosives contamination, restrictions to access and protect land, and fundamental violations of children rights. He commended the strength and effectiveness of coordinated protection efforts to provide essential services and protection and the substantial advancements the cluster and its AoRs have done in protection risk analysis, including the publication of 80 Protection Analysis Updates since 2021.

Jim Robinson, Global HLP AoR Coordinator, noted that how we work together will be a theme for the Conference – including how we can get the most from this committed protection community to work more effectively, efficiently and with increased impact. It is an opportunity for critical reflection – to think how best we can harness and deepen our working relationships, building trust in each other, acknowledging each other's strengths, what we have in common, and giving each other space to do our work. He also recognised that we are in a moment of significant challenge. More than ever, we need collective action and engagement, each having complementary roles to play, different strengths, weaknesses, that when we work together have impact beyond the sum of the parts. We can't do this alone, and we continue to deepen our work in collaboration with other clusters and partners, including those working on longer term solutions, peace and conflict. From the perspective of the HLP AoR, housing, land and property issues are a golden thread through humanitarian response and solutions – if we don't engage then it will undermine effective and longer-term outcomes for those affected by crisis.

Ron Pouwels, Global CP AoR Coordinator, reported back on some of the follow up undertaken on the action points of the 2023 Protection Conference in Amman. Regarding developing joint tools, guides and resources, he mentioned the joined-up analysis of protection risks developed by the GPC and its AoRs. As part of *Fostering and encouraging collective/joint efforts on needs assessments and capacity strengthening, including joint efforts on quality data*, he highlighted the Sanremo training, the joint two-day IM training at the Conference, and generic online training modules for coordinators and IMOs developed by the CP AoR and other UNICEF-led clusters. On the action point to *Rather than focus on issues, risks and shortcomings of the response; shift from negative to positive narrative on protection's opportunities and value,* he highlighted action taken globally, including the protection funding report published and presented to donors last year in October, which contained examples of what can be done if protection actors receive funding.

Christelle Loupforest, Global MA Coordinator and **Jennifer Chase, Global GBV AoR Coordinator** also provided opening remarks reflecting their expectations for the Conference and thanking participants for joining from many operations.

Getting Acquainted and Team Building

During this kick-off session, the group was led through a quick 'landing' exercise, since some Coordinators had travelled very long distances. A quick survey was taken to visualize how many participants were attending the Conference for the first time and how many had been present at previous annual meetings. The group was asked who had travelled the longest distance, the number of IMOs present, representation from different regions, the global team and local organizations.

There was an ice-breaker activity centered around communication and interpersonal skills, using Lego[1], which involved asking questions in pairs and practicing "really listening" to the response, rather than anticipating the answer or waiting to express own individual opinions. This activity was conducted in a fun way and through providing a short feedback loop for a fast-learning curve. **A lot of creativity and finding solutions quickly was also demonstrated, skills that humanitarian coordinators often utilize in their work.**

By table, mixed across AoRs, the groups also built 'marble runs', using the materials provided to each small group. The exercise put into practice skills that are needed for working in groups and being able to listen and provide constructive feedback. Both activities referred to 'hard skills' rather than 'soft skills', as they are often referenced.

Simplification Recommendations and Ways of Working

The purpose of this session was to **share the progress on the ongoing dialogue on the simplification recommendations of the protection architecture and use the Conference as an opportunity to reflect further on their implementation and the effective ways of working in the Protection Cluster, between the coordinators, promoting optimization, integration partnerships, synergies and complementarity.** At the Conference in Amman in 2023, UNHCR led consultations with field coordinators to help inform the development of recommendations in response to the IASC Independent Protection Review that highlighted the need for more integrated approaches, optimize resources, one voice communication and synergies. This session built on last year's discussions and circled back to report on progress made. To kick off the discussion the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection at UNHCR, Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela briefed the Conference participants on the discussions held thus far on the recommendations, as well as outlining the way forward. This session was organised to ensure country inputs on good practices to enrich the coming implementation of the simplification recommendations, and complementary ways of working, so that these recommendations are relevant and useful to field colleagues. Participants worked in smaller groups and recorded their main points in jam boards, before presenting best practices on collaboration in plenary. Global coordination teams will inform the country clusters on next steps to implement the simplification recommendations.

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[1] A big thank you to the colleagues from the Lego Foundation for preparing and training the organisers on the Lego and the 'marble run' activities and who kindly packaged and provided all of the materials at no cost.

DAYS 2 & 3: TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY, 11 - 12 June

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 Cluster	- Townhall with GPC Coordinator - Updates on Major Crisis: Sudan, Ukraine and Mali - What Should Protection Responses Look Like? - Protection Negotiations with CCHN - Accountability to Affected Populations - Centrality of Protection - GPC Strategic Framework 2025 – 2029 - Strategic Analysis and Planning - Peer-to-Peer Exchanges

Child Protection AoR	- Child Protection Analysis and Situation Monitoring:
	   o Overview of the existing initiatives
	   o Presentations from country-level contexts
	   o Presentation on country profiles project
	- Information Management Initiatives at Global Level
	- Updates from the Alliance Annual Meeting (4-6 June 2024, Panama)
	- HPC Review and Reflection
	- Brief Presentations from countries on initiatives, approaches, case studies with Q&A
	- Capacity Development Updates: Working Across Sectors, Implementation of the Learning and Development Strategy
	- Resource mobilisation:
	   o Experience-sharing on country-level good practices
	- Thematic sessions:
	   o Localization
	   o Working across sectors
	- Development of New Global Strategy
	- Accountability to Affected Population and Child Participation

Gender-Based Violence AoR	- Findings of the GBV AoR Annual Survey - GBV AoR External Review Findings and Recommendations - Navigating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence landscape - Women-Led Organizations Leadership in GBV Coordination - Self-Care for GBV Frontline Responders as Capacity Building - GBV and SRH Integration - Donors Engagement and Advocacy - Presentations con country level contexts and global initiatives, followed by an 'open mike' opportunity to present.
Housing, Land and Property AoR	- Climate Change and HLP – impact on programming, coordination and our response - Deep dive on South Sudan HLP experiences

	- Working in Customary Settings with multiple approaches to HLP definitions and application
	- Challenges of HLP coordination – sharing experiences and possible responses
	- Joint session with Mine Action AoR on areas for collaboration, joint analysis and coordination
	    o Designing a conceptual framework for HLP
	    o Coordination and Information Management for HLP
	    o Hearing from each other – sharing operational experiences from Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, DRC and Somalia

Mine Action AoR	- MA AoR coordination: progress, challenges and plans - Service mapping and monitoring results - Activity-based costing methodologies - Stakeholder engagement, resource mobilization and process to divide allocations from pooled funds to protection and AoRs. - Resources for the prevention of and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. - Example of collaboration with HLP AoR in Somalia - Sharing good practices: victim assistance coordination in Ukraine, MHPSS in Libya and South Sudan (psychological first aid in risk education) and risk education in hard-to-reach areas in Myanmar

Gender-Based Violence AoR

Child Protection AoR

Housing, Land and Property AoR

Protection

DAY 4: THURSDAY, 11 MAY

Keynote Panel: Future of Coordination

On Days 4 and 5, donors, global partners and other stakeholders were invited to join the global discussions. To kick off, a keynote panel on the topic "Future of Coordination", moderated by **Hazel de Wet, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes at UNICEF**, was joined by an esteemed group of speakers.

Sebastian Diaz Parra, Protection Cluster Coordinator in Colombia, shared his key experience with the flagship initiative, overlapping crises in Colombia, the refugee and migrant situation, climate change and more. Lessons learned from this initiative included the need to simplify coordination structures and local protection networks (including the capacity of communities & government), break down silos, place communities at the centre allowing implementation with and for people, focus humanitarian resources on geographical location and consider community capacities, and prioritise localization as a way forward.

Evelyn Aero, Regional Head of Core Competencies and Adviser Information Counselling and Legal Assistance with the NRC East and Southern Africa Regional Office, shared a regional perspective on coordination. She flagged limited resources for coordination, and highlighted good practices in alignment of country level coordination to regional coordination. She emphasised the importance of using coordination to reduce duplication, operationalize existing mechanisms, and coordinate not only with protection actors but donors. She also reminded the audience that coordination might be challenged by the agency mandate and specificity of the region.

Shaza Ahmed, Executive Director of Nada Elazhar for Disaster Prevention and Sustainable Development in Sudan, shared what positive impact women-led organizations bring to coordination. Leadership is needed in all humanitarian contexts with meaningful participation and clear roles and responsibilities. Women-led organizations in Sudan have better access to targeted communities to deliver aid in a timely manner as they have the trust of the beneficiaries. Women-led organizations are present in hard-to-reach areas, where conflict is ongoing, as well as to other states. Recently, 10 women-led organizations joined Sudan's GBV Network. Coordination is becoming more service-based and women-led organizations are at the forefront of service delivery. They can work both on the component of GBV and Child Protection, as well as in Mine Action. A "Women-Led Organizations Task Force" has been established in Sudan where women can participate in decision-making. Despite progress and collective efforts, significant progress is needed for localization and women-led organizations. Needs keep increasing but the decrease in funding impacts operational capacities. Other challenges mentioned include a drop in staffing, limited participation and not being recognized as a key stakeholder. The advantages of women-led organizations were mentioned to be presence, trust, and meaningful participation.

Lewis Sida, Co-Director of the Humanitarian Learning Centre, shared key findings from the IDP review regarding coordination and how it will look in the next five years. Some of the main findings include the need to enhance and support the Protection Cluster capacity, but also to reinforce HCs authority. He acknowledged the clusters improvement and the progress, but also shared concerns, considering costs, heavy and time-consuming structures, and the challenges that clusters face to evolve beyond the initial response. He

highlighted the need to prioritize area-based coordination, less clusterized at the sub-national level, and ensure that affected people at the core of decision-making.

Bernadette Castel Hollingsworth, Deputy Director of the Division of International Protection at UNHCR, shared her thoughts on how new initiatives support the centrality of protection. Collective efforts need to commit collectively to achieve protection outcomes and eliminate risks in crisis collectively. New initiatives support accountability to affected populations and area-based coordination. She emphasised moving from supply-driven to people-centric/demand-centric support. Future coordination needs to be closer to the points of delivery, and therefore more coordination is required at the sub-national level. While giving acknowledgment for the growth of clusters and their work, she emphasized that processes distance us from people, and there is an ongoing need to be closer, and more accessible to people.

Eugene Kongnyuy, Deputy of the Humanitarian Response Division at UNFPA, shared the role of a cluster-lead agency in advancing localization in humanitarian action and the role of local organizations in coordination. Coordination between global and local levels improves the effectiveness of service provision demonstrating the importance of localization. Localization is about creating a humanitarian decision-making space, taking into consideration local voices. He advocated for flexible multi-year funding, providing example of channelling money to local actors, including women-led organizations. He encouraged the advocating for and support of inclusive coordination structures. Local actors can shape humanitarian strategies and be included in decision-making. It is important to identify actors who can become members of clusters by supporting them and building their capacity, bringing something to the table as an equal partner. He also highlights the importance of identifying partners who are sidelined such as women-led organizations, people with disabilities, etc. In the next five years, there will be more local actors and governments being involved in coordination structures and humanitarian response. Local actors and women-led organizations provide valuable understanding of local needs. He concluded by reminding us that this approach is all about sustainability.

Protection Cluster and AoRs Joined-Up Analysis of Protection Risks and Needs for Strategy And Planning

This session introduced a revised joined-up approach to protection analysis, which entails more co-work and engagement of the AoRs, and a stronger focus on the Protection Cluster's own analysis and narrative rather than HNOs/HRPs. It was highlighted that as a sector there is a need to have a stronger protection narrative, and this require an adaptation in operations that needs to be strategically supported and accompanied by a clear set of efforts on support, external engagement and advocacy. The session was held as a complement to a **two-day extensive dedicated training with Protection Clusters and Areas of Responsibility IMs and analysts**. The two-day IM workshop is summarised later in this report.

Opportunities: The revised approach to protection risk analysis offers the opportunity to reinforce **qualitative analysis and strategic analysis with AoRs and partners** over heavy data collection. In addition, it places a stronger focus on protection risks, in line with the role of the Protection Cluster to ensure an integral action to reduce protection risks, including humanitarian response, Centrality of Protection and engagement with other mechanisms. It is specifically geared to reduce the dependency on PIN, by starting the process of identifying and calculating a more solid severity of protection risks and consequently the number of people exposed to protection risks. Ultimately, it introduces common tools for PCs and AoRs to harmonize approaches

at technical level, and create the opportunity of co-working or co-sharing resources, specifically focusing on area-based modalities.

The fundamental necessity of Coordinators and IM to work more strategically together, and not divide tasks based on functions was discussed. IM are often relegated to a role of *data provider* only based on short term requests, and oftentimes excluded from strategic engagement and presentation on policy, programming and advocacy. Of note is that a clear division of roles between HNO (IMs) and HRP (Coordinators) has been generally identified, with HNO and HRP not often linked strategically or reflected against PC protection strategy and planning.

The discussions clearly pointed out that, as a sector, we must generally move away from dedicating most of our efforts to only the HRP processes. If the sector wants to address many of the challenges we have on analysis specifically, there is a need for the Protection Cluster and the coordination teams to dedicate more time and resources to a sector-owned process of analysis, that can then feed into the HNOs/HRPs.

GPC Strategic Framework 2025-2029

The session was an initial opportunity for many participants to contribute to the ongoing consultations for development of a new GPC Strategic Framework (2025-2029). Presenting the current GPC Strategic Framework (2020-2024) was an opportunity to reflect on the five priorities and consider what priorities should be included in the new GPC Strategic Framework. Participants were split into groups and asked to represent a group of stakeholders and then, from that perspective, share three key priorities that they would suggest are included in the new Strategic Framework. Stakeholders represented included crisis-affected communities, Humanitarian Country Teams, Non-humanitarian actors, country clusters and areas of responsibility, and donors. Examples of some of the suggestions include the following:

- Work more with local communities, including those affected by crisis, as a starting point for response.
- Acknowledge differences in crisis-affected communities, taking into account all vulnerable people, their needs, experiences and reflecting an understanding of the context in any response.
- Engage with communities so that they are included in coordination structures.
- Improve information-sharing capacities so that all stakeholders and actors are regularly updated.
- Be more proactive with protection responses.
- Ensure more leadership and participation on protection issues with governments and authorities.
- Support and strengthen legal frameworks and policies that support the protection of communities.
- Consider how best to include non-humanitarian actors and clarify complementary roles.
- Clarify role of protection clusters regarding implementation of the centrality of protection.
- Identify a more practical role in how protection actors participate in durable solutions.
- Consider preparedness and how to work with communities to respond to crises that can be anticipated.
- Have more NGOs included in protection coordination.
- Jointly develop guidance and tools for use by clusters and their AoRs in the field.

All suggestions were noted and will be considered as part of the consultations process and development of the new GPC Strategic Framework. Next steps for development include key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a survey to consult with as many people as possible to reflect on the current Strategic Framework and what should be included in the new Strategic Framework. These steps will be taken, led by a

Senior ProCap Advisor hosted by the GPC, with oversight and participation of the GPC Strategic Advisory Group. Drafts will be prepared, updated and validated with extensive participation and will take place throughout 2024 with the planned launch of the new Strategic Framework in early 2025.

DAY 5: FRIDAY, 12 MAY

Technical and Policy Lab: Case Management Coordination

The lab was facilitated by the CP, GBV and MA AoRs with contributions from IRC and DRC. Approaches on case management and victim assistance were presented. This was followed by Q&A sessions to clarify questions and perceptions. Participants worked in groups to analyse complex scenarios that required multiple case management assistance. Sub-topics covered included socio-ecological models for case management, data protection, referrals and service mapping, funding and system strengthening and overlapping.

Technical and Policy Lab: Frontline Protection Responses

Coordinators from Burkina Faso, DRC, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Somalia, Syria and Ukraine participated in the discussion. They were joined by ICRC participants, as well as donor representatives. Discussions included understanding frontlines and understanding frontline responses, including their limitations and challenges.

Frontline humanitarian responses were described as responses that aim to meet people at their most critical point of need, often as the first point of access between communities and humanitarian actors, to provide lifesaving protection and assistance. It was noted that:
- In some cases, this response meets at the actual frontlines of conflict where communities have crossed lines between military actors.
- The scope of what constitutes a front line can also be shaped by non-traditional armed groups (including gangs) or geographical considerations in the case of disaster (such as flooding) or conflict responses.
- These responses are often operationally challenging and driven by critical levels of need and limited capacities to cope.

Actions agreed as part of the discussion included:

I. The GPC will continue to communicate the value of protection in emergency and frontline responses, as well as reiterating a holistic commitment to the Centrality of Protection.
II. The GPC will compile a repository of protection and frontline response practices – including existing ToRs, SoPs and other relevant tools.
III. Protection partners are called to ensure ongoing commitment to coordinated and collaborative approaches to frontline responses
IV. The Protection Cluster and AoRs will continue to work towards an integrated approach to providing assistance in frontline responses to consolidate resources, strategic access and reduce any unnecessary burden on frontline partners. All efforts are motivated by ensuring a robust protection outcome.

Technical and Policy Lab: Localization

This lab aimed to share lessons and good practices in promoting participation, influence, and leadership of Local and National Actors (LNAs), including Women Led Organisations (WLOs) in protection cluster and AoRs coordination mechanisms in line with the IASC guidance on strengthening participation, representation, and

leadership of LNAs in humanitarian coordination mechanisms. It also recognised the importance of prioritising localisation in line with the recommendations on the simplification of the protection architecture. It was facilitated by Localisation Specialists from the Global CP AoR and the Human Rights Officer of the Humanitarian Action Unit at OHCHR and the Global/Regional GBV AoR. Outcomes of group discussion on how Protection Clusters would promote access to funding for LNAs included:

I. **Promote the visibility of LNAs` work:** facilitate outreach and exchange between LNAs and donors through joint preparation of briefings, field visits, information, and advocacy products, and document and acknowledge emblematic work by LNAs. Some suggest giving larger space for LNAs to prepare agendas and messaging for exchanges with donors and the diplomatic community.

II. **Strengthen the capacity of LNAs:** this includes sensitization on resource mobilization, funding mechanisms, proposal writing, budgeting, fundraising, as well as coaching and mentoring activities targeting smaller NGOs. PC can establish a consortium of INGOs and NNGOs to jointly prepare and develop joint proposals. PC can also open exposure of LNAs to cluster-specific project vetting exercises to gain practical knowledge of project screening and vetting.

III. **Promote access to pooled funds:** Some operations have dedicated localization funds or set up project scoring/selection tools in favour of local actors (e.g., an extra 10 points for LNAs). NPCs can further support % of LNAs` access to CBPFs through help with project proposal formulation and related timelines and requirements. PC can further work with the Pooled Fund manager to resolve due diligence or eligibility requirements issues and support learning activities for LNAs.

IV. **Long-term vision on resource mobilization for protection**: PC should work with other non-humanitarian actors in contexts undergoing transition or cluster de-activation to ensure the sustainability of protection programming. In such contexts, PC should start as early as possible to plan for transition to avoid sudden suspension of activities.

V. **Advocacy with donors to allocate greater quality and flexible funding for LNAs**. This includes developing mechanisms for smaller grants for LNAs, tailored allocations for LNAs, simplifying reporting templates, etc. PCs can facilitate dialogue and exchanges with LNAs to flag their concerns about eligibility and other donor-related conditionalities.

VI. **Advocacy within Cluster-lead agency for a shift in financing LNAs including through channelling direct and quality funding.**

VII. **Fair and equitable distribution of funds including overheads and admin costs.** This helps LNAs to sustain human capacity beyond the timeframe of projects and cover admin fees. NPC can document good practices and track % of overheads that go to LNAs.

Technical and Policy Lab: Cross-Cutting Themes

The integration of cross-cutting issues such as AAP, localization, inclusion, gender equality and others should facilitate quality, accountable and inclusive humanitarian programming. To reach those who are most impacted by a crisis and facing the most critical protection risks requires a truly people-centered approach. Recognizing that the integration of the various cross-cutting issues can be overwhelming to operational partners and that they tend to work in silos rather than reinforcing each other, there are ongoing efforts to bring more coherence across these areas of work and ensure the linkages are clear between them.

The aim of the lab was to jointly articulate key recommendations or actions for addressing cross-cutting issues more meaningfully in cluster-coordination and the humanitarian response, considering opportunities and concerns of moving towards a more integrated approach. Through exchanges of practices and lessons learned,

the role the Protection Cluster and AoRs have in promoting particularly AAP, Inclusion, Protection Mainstreaming and GBV risk mitigation - in collaboration with OCHA and/or HCTs - was addressed.

Technical and Policy Lab: Humanitarian Transition (Scale Up and Scale Down)

As of 2024, at least eight clusters are in discussions around potential deactivation or transition from IASC humanitarian response mechanisms. Recent evaluations and reviews have provoked discussions regarding the cluster activation being more strategic, less automatic and time limited so that humanitarian coordination is not the only solution. The purpose of this lab was to jointly articulate key elements of ensuring the continuity of protection during humanitarian coordination transitions. This included spelling out technical and operational components (e.g. particular risks involved), international and national coordination structures (i.e. potential safety net structures), roles and relationships, and alert mechanisms. The lab was organized around the following elements:

I.   **Exchanging lessons learned on previous transitions:** Drawing on the experience of colleagues in the room, we reflected on what worked well, key challenges, and changes that are needed based on past experiences with transitions, including related to conflict and disaster.

II. **Understanding the status of current transition discussions:** Participants discussed ongoing discussions on transition, their status and the level of information the country cluster will have. This section reflected on where clusters are engaged on transition and consider whether clusters feel equipped to input into HCT level transition discussions, and to support transition planning within the cluster and with its members.

III. **Identifying types of contexts where transitions could be expected.** This segment introduced the UN Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement's 'circuit breaker' proposal and will identify an indicative list of contextual factors that may make a cluster deactivation more likely. Note that the aim is not to identify where a transition should be pursued (tools are already under development to support this analysis). The aim is rather to highlight where preparedness for a transition is particularly needed.

IV. **Outlining core protection concerns to consider if a transition is underway.** This segment considered specific questions that may need to be asked during a transition to identify risks and response needs that may require continued attention following a cluster deactivation, including whether any specific groups may face marginalization or exclusion. Reference can be made to the UNHCR protection risk analysis tool regarding internal displacement solutions as well as other tools in situations of transition (including protection of civilians).

V.   **Setting out general roles, responsibilities, and relationships during and after transitions.** These roles were particularly elaborated in connection with the common protection concerns outlined in the previous segment.

VI. **Providing options for safety net coordination mechanisms.** In some contexts where there are residual risks or needs that require an interagency response, it may be necessary to maintain a protection coordination forum following cluster deactivation. This segment reflected on what form that coordination body can take and where it might be situated in the remaining interagency coordination architecture.

Technical and Policy Lab: Advocacy

The primary objective of this session was to enhance participants' advocacy skills and advance reflections on ways they can further develop their advocacy plans and actions, with a focus on:

- Reviewing and developing mindsets and skillsets for effective advocacy
- Developing critical thinking approaches for setting advocacy goals and strategies
- Acquiring actionable tactics for advocacy and tools for personal development as advocates.

A definition of Advocacy was provided in the beginning to equip the participants for the questions and group work: "Advocacy is a deliberate process based on evidence to directly and indirectly influence decision-makers, influencers, and key stakeholders to take specific actions that contribute to the health and fulfillment of human rights…The advocacy process is complete when the decision-makers take the actions or make the changes you seek." – GBV Advocacy Guidance (2023). A skillset required for advocacy was also presented on, including Communication Skills, Critical and Linear (Cause and Effect) Thinking, Analysis, and Strategic Planning. In addition, the soft skills for advocacy were also discussed, including Perseverance, Flexibility/Adaptability, Empathy, Problem-Solving, Being Concise, Sticking to the key points, Making and keeping friends.

After this introduction on advocacy, the participants were asked to work in groups and to choose three advocacy tactics, discuss how they have been used and identify pros and cons of each. Then the participants also shared the blockers and challenges that they face in their advocacy efforts. The participants discussed the possible solutions to overcome these blockages in the plenary, including changing the messenger, being ready for the right moment to advocate, and using allies with different mandates to reinforce the advocacy efforts. At the end of this lab, a list of support options was developed by the participants as the follow up.

ICRC Professional Standards

The ICRC joined the audience of Protection Cluster and AoR coordination teams to present the new Professional Standards for Protection Work (4th Edition). This included why the professional standards are needed in protection work, who is involved, who the standards and for and details on the different chapters of the document. The presentation placed a spotlight on key elements and chapters of the Standards, including protection leadership, the overarching principles, managing protection strategies, building on the legal base of protection, the protection architecture, managing data and information for protection outcomes, a protection approach to digital risk, and enhancing professional capacities.

The Emotional Capacity Building of First Responders

This session focused on the work being done by the GBV AoR in building up the capacity of first responders, equipping them with essential mental health skills needed for their own well-being and while offering protection services to survivors. Self-care should not be seen as a luxury but as an ethical imperative. It is from this foundation that first responders can respond not just with knowledge, but with the embodied skills necessary for self-awareness. This capacity is the main tool for ensuring safety for oneself and others, recognizing signs of distress and burnout, managing stress, offering and seeking supportive communication in everyday interactions, avoiding judgment, and recognizing and responding to distress in adults and children of different ages. The GBV AoR offers interventions through courses conducted both in-person and online. Over 6 to 8 weeks, first responders are trained to connect with their bodies and identify better ways to respond rather than react. Participants experience concrete tools to access their nervous system, learn basic neuroscientific evidence supporting the importance of this capacity building, and have opportunities to share and connect with colleagues from a human perspective.

DAYS 4 & 5: THURSDAY - FRIDAY, 13 - 14 June

Dedicated Training with Protection Clusters and AoRs on Information Management and Analysis

This two-day extensive training way provided in parallel to the Conference sessions, aiming to test and revise joint solutions and ways of working for stronger protection risks analysis and identification of people most in need, in increasingly complex environment and protection crises. The dedicated training was fully co-prepared and co-facilitated by the GPC and the AoRs. It has served as a peer-to-peer exchange and validation of the revised joined-up protection analysis methodology and tools with both PC and AoRs IM. The training has been designed as the final step of a process of exchange, mutual learning and testing of tools that has been introduced to PC and AoR Teams between the month of January and June 2024.

The training was based mostly on joint exercises and testing of common areas that needed clarity, further reflection or practical application. This is the summary of the areas of work and discussion:

- The Protection Cluster contribution to the JIAF 2.0 and the upcoming HNO 2025, addressing past challenges and leveraging on opportunities of the renewed approach.

- Deep dive into the specific tools for Protection Needs severity and People in Need, and specifically into how to combine multiple tools to adapt to different levels of data availability.

- Lessons learned from the field on protection risks severity monitoring and service mapping.

- Simulation of joined up data landscaping and joint assessment between Protection Clusters and AoRs, making use of the new harmonized data and information databank and process.

- Revised protection response framework and opportunities to revise jointly 4/5W for response monitoring and strategic linkages between HNOs and HRPs.

A last session was dedicated to discussing and developing a road map of IM needs, in terms of support and guidance, until the end of 2024 for all operations. The resulting road map is being discussed between the GPC and the Global AoRs to provide joint support to operations in their efforts on protection analysis and preparation of HNOs.

Closing Remarks

The GPC and AoR Coordinators closed the Global Protection Conference 2024 by recalling the key points of reflection, highlights and takeaways. It was acknowledged how challenging it can be to work as a Coordinator - a role that is not sufficiently recognized when everything is running smoothly and where there is often blame and judgement when coordination is not going well even when the situation may be beyond the coordinator's control. When discussing localization, we often raise for consideration the issue of power dynamics, the importance of being supportive, occasionally offering coaching or mentoring, and being respectful and patient. These suggestions are good to keep in mind when we interact with our colleagues across clusters and AoRs - we are all living in stressful and challenging contexts so kindness can go a long way. There was also a reminder that if there are challenges between colleagues or clusters/AoRs, these issues can be raised to the GPC/AoRs at the global level.

In closing, the GPC Coordinator thanked all participants for their constructive and active participation, the AoR Global Coordinators and the SAG Co Chair for their support in the preparations for and during the conference, and the team that organised the logistics of the conference for the success of the event. He also expressed gratitude for the donors' participation and support to the conference, in particular PRM, BHA and ECHO. Josep noted some of the key messages received from participants, in particular their commitment to better work and respond together based on a protection narrative that clearly articulates the critical protection risks in each operation and guides the collective response. He noted that, to fulfil this commitment, it is imperative to work in an integrated manner, not to work in silos, ensuring complementarity, mutual support and reinforcement and that all areas of the protection response are well represented. Josep noted that people in humanitarian crises are facing extreme protection challenges, and that, we, the protection community working with and for them are responding in a context of financial constraints, and within coordination structures in constant evolution. In this context, it is more important than ever that we promote a protection-centered collective response to mitigate risks and save lives. He finalized his intervention closing the protection conference expressing his appreciation and gratitude to all field staff for their commitment and their consistent daily work, often in very adverse conditions.