



**HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy
Advocacy Roadmap
December 2024**

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1. BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

In August 2024, the Afghanistan Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) endorsed a Centrality of Protection (CoP) Strategy, with a commitment to lead and coordinate implementation of the strategy over the coming three years. The strategy reflects the contributions of HCT members and allies and crystalizes the particular role HCT members can play in leading, complementing, coordinating and shepherding robust advocacy actions aimed at reducing the identified, prioritized critical protection risks that are experienced by communities in Afghanistan.

Throughout the HCT's CoP Strategy, advocacy and engagement feature heavily as a core approach to prevent, stop and mitigate the identified protection risks. The contributions of advocacy, as laid out in the strategy, are primarily focused on influencing the De Facto Authorities (DFA) in support of improved and equitable access to humanitarian assistance and protection. In addition to the focus on the DFA as primary duty bearers, given the aims of the HCT's advocacy, other key stakeholders include donor governments, third party member states (particularly neighboring states) and communities themselves given their different roles in engaging with and influencing the DFA and in contributing to protection outcomes in relation to the prioritized protection risks addressed by the HCT CoP Strategy. Engagement and collaboration with a range of allies, including local/community organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) women's rights organizations, women led organizations, and leaders and human rights defenders remains foundational, aiming to support and amplify existing protection advocacy efforts and add value based on HCT relationships, credibility and influence.

Throughout the HCT CoP Strategy and as part of this related advocacy roadmap, the emphasis is placed on engagement and relationship-building with key targets and employing persuasion and mobilization as the primary modes of advocacy. There is also a recognition of the severe constraints such advocacy will be advanced within, particularly in light of the highly restrictive humanitarian and civic space in Afghanistan, reflecting the deeply discriminatory measures and unlawful impediments advanced by the DFA since taking power in 2021. Shrinking space for social activism is more evident: the same existence of CSOs - category that includes also the OPDs - and their access to conducive working conditions have become extremely difficult. Not only have more restrictions been put on these organizations, but the overall space for civic activism and engagement has shrunk significantly.

Despite the constraints, the HCT CoP strategy advances a clear vision for the critical role that advocacy must play in contributing to the needed changes in policy and practice in response to the prioritized protection risks identified.

This Advocacy Roadmap should be considered as a complement to and further elaboration of the HCT Protection Strategy, further outlining key elements to the collective advocacy efforts and identifying approaches, tactics and actions to be advanced by HCT members and in collaboration with a range of partners and allies. The HCT CoP Strategy Implementation Support Group (ISG) will play a critical role in advancing related advocacy coordination, monitoring and reporting, and ensuring this Roadmap continues to be an iterative and living document throughout the lifespan of the HCT CoP Strategy.

2. AIMS OF THE ADVOCACY ROADMAP

This Advocacy Roadmap aims to set out and consolidate key advocacy approaches, tactics and actions that will be undertaken by the HCT and its members in support of CoP Strategy implementation.

It serves as a complement to the Strategy, enabling further articulation of the advocacy dimensions of the agreed-on Strategy. The Roadmap also aims to identify the relevant points of collaboration and complementarity with allies and other aligned engagement and advocacy efforts, particularly in relation to the **Humanitarian Access Strategy** and **Gender Equality and Empowerment Working Group Strategy** (GEEWG Strategy).

The Advocacy Roadmap aims to serve as a guiding tool for the ISG as it coordinates, tracks and assesses the impact of advocacy actions, and ultimately, how to further advance implementation and impact of the overall CoP strategy.

3. ADVOCACY APPROACHES IN AFGHANISTAN

The below outline of core advocacy approaches is meant to provide the ISG with a flexible framework that captures the main (but not exclusive) approaches guiding the advocacy being advanced by HCT members and partners in support of implementation of the HCT CoP strategy.

Rights-Based and Principled Engagement

- Importantly, the advocacy priorities and actions being advanced by the Afghanistan HCT are firmly grounded in relevant international legal frameworks and related obligations of the (de facto) State, particularly International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law, women's rights framework, and International Refugee Law.
- Equally, HCT advocacy will drive and leverage commitments across members to adhere to shared, principled positioning in support of protection and human rights, including women and girls participation, and gender related protection issues and engagement with the DFA. Such commitments will steer organizational positioning and engagement and provide a strong foundation for coherent and effective advocacy by the HCT with the DFA and other targets.

Collaborative and Complementary

- While its direct political influence may be limited, the voice of the in-country humanitarian community in Afghanistan has important credibility and functions: it represents a life-saving presence on the ground and local expertise, with a demonstrated track record of action in support of crisis-affected people. Reflecting this, the HCT and humanitarian partners play an important role in both advancing collaborative advocacy efforts with duty bearers at local, regional and national levels as well as working to mobilize, inform and complement the advocacy efforts of other actors, including those in different sectors or situated outside the country.
- This collaborative approach to advocacy must focus on deepening engagements with a range of local actors, voices and influencers, with a focus on women's rights leaders and organizations. HCT advocacy efforts must seek to support and amplify these advocacy efforts, build ongoing consultations and drive forward inclusive approaches where the HCT can add value to, elevate and share risk with local advocacy initiatives. HCT is committed to amplify and be guided by the voices of Afghan women and girls, given the gendered nature of the conditions in Afghanistan.

Collaborative efforts between OCHA and the AAP Working Group at the sub-national level would enhance the representation of community voices in HCT's decision-making and advocacy initiatives.

- The HCT's advocacy efforts aim to advance the specific objectives outlined in the CoP Strategy while also linking with and leveraging related strategies, including the **Gender Equality and Empowerment Working Group Strategy** and the **Humanitarian Access Strategy**. Some of the specific actions that link with these strategies are included in the attached Action Plan.

Localized and Tailored

- In the Afghanistan context, efforts by HCT members and different partners to use community-based approaches to protection advocacy remain vital. Such efforts that support and further strengthen the engagement, advocacy and negotiations efforts of community and local actors vis-a-vis decision-makers remains critical, contributing to ensuring CoP advocacy efforts remain grounded in the leadership and priorities of local actors and communities themselves.
- HCT advocacy efforts must also seek to engage, influence and mobilize community leaders, religious leaders and other influential figures as critical entry points and channels for change with respect to protection priorities. Effective advocacy with such targets requires investment, including in developing the right framing of messaging based on cultural and religious norms, working through and with other influential local actors, translation into local languages, and, perhaps most importantly, grounded in sustained engagement and relationship-building. HCT will also support engagement and efforts by women and women leaders at community level to amplify their efforts.
- Given the OCHA's established presence and that of other UN agencies and ongoing engagements at the national level through the Technical-Level Coordination Forum (TLCF), and the provincial level through the Provincial Level Coordination Forum (PLCF), OCHA/other relevant UN agencies can leverage these platforms to support HCT's broader advocacy initiatives. This includes engaging local leaders and de facto authorities to foster an environment conducive to humanitarian access and protection.

Principled Engagement and Sensitization

- Principled engagement with the DFA on protection is a foundational priority for HCT advocacy. A joint, principled approach, with related shared positioning and red lines, must be applied across engagement with the DFA, inclusive of engagement with local, provincial and national DFA stakeholders, and advanced by all HCT members and the broader humanitarian sector. Such principled engagement must include commitments with regards to women's participation, and leadership, in all aspects of the humanitarian response and draw on other existing positioning of the HCT and UNCT. Such joint principles and positions are critical to advancing a credible, unified humanitarian voice and maximizing influence on protection priorities with the DFA. This may be brought up within the framework of more accepted and less sensitive protection intervention and will be unpacked in the key messages developed in annex to this document.
- As part of engagement and advocacy with the DFA, sensitization efforts on core protection concepts, risks and needed actions (including with respect to protection principles, equitable access and access of all groups including women and men, violence against most vulnerable segments of the population, including Gender Based Violence, women's participation in

protection programming, and PSEA) must remain as a core element. Such efforts must aim to deconstruct protection concepts, counter misinformation/misperceptions and advance an understanding of protection grounded in the priorities and needs of Afghan men, women, boys and girls. As noted above, framing key protection concepts and needed actions in relevant normative frameworks in Afghanistan, including Islamic traditions and religious teachings, is another element for HCT members to further deepen as part of advocacy efforts with the DFA as well as influencing efforts with community and religious leaders and groups.

Persuasion and Mobilization

- Three well established and recognized approaches to advocacy that are used by humanitarian and other actors globally include persuasion, mobilization and denunciation, which integrate a mix of private and public actions. Based on the HCT Strategy and learnings from advocacy efforts with the DFA to date, the overarching theory of change for HCT advocacy is to persuade relevant decision-makers to advance more inclusive and protection-focused policies and practices, and to mobilize key partners, allies and networks in support of such efforts, through sensitization, persuasion and pressure.
- The most effective forms of persuasion are often done through direct and private communication. Such forms of advocacy by the HCT, and its component UN entities and via the mobilization of and collaboration with allies, from community leaders to women’s networks to neighboring states, must go beyond an ‘access and delivery’ focus and raise and seek to address harmful behaviours, practices and policies.
- Denunciation efforts, while still representing an approach that can be used at strategic moments, given the operational profile of the stakeholders involved, the highly sensitive context and understanding of change pathways with the DFA, it will be less relied on by those in-country and a complementary approach better suited for use by partners outside of Afghanistan.

<i>Persuasion</i>	<i>Mobilization</i>	<i>Denunciation</i>
<p>HCT members and key partners and allies will contribute to convincing decision-makers within the DFA of needed policy and practice changes through a range of persuasive efforts.</p> <p>This includes sensitization and ensuring an enhanced understanding by the DFA of protection risks, impacts on Afghan men, women, boys and girls and relevant actions to address such risks, framed in the interests/values of the DFA and combined with pressure</p>	<p>HCT members will build and strengthen a network of allies who can exert influence with DFA and key targets, and further mobilize other influential stakeholders, in support of shared advocacy aims.</p> <p>This includes third party Member States and donor governments, certain allies within the DFA, allied religious/community leaders, women’s rights organizations and leaders, development actors, human rights actors and civil society networks.</p>	<p>HCT members will utilize coordinated denunciation, primarily in private ways, when strategic. Given the potential risks with such an approach, it should be used when there is clear value to be gained, and with a fulsome risk assessment.</p> <p>This includes the HCT leveraging private channels and confidential human rights mechanisms for such denunciation/condemnation and inform the more public-facing advocacy efforts of allies</p>

from multiple points of influence.		(including human rights actors, diaspora), as relevant.
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Private and Public

- With the above three approaches, both private and public advocacy is possible and can be used strategically. While private advocacy by the HCT will be the dominant mode of influencing action in Afghanistan, public messages and approaches can contribute to a political cost of action/inaction that can affect the decisions of targets over time, as multiple pressures accumulate. Public advocacy in support of HCT CoP objectives does not necessarily always need to be voiced directly by HCT members or partners but can also/instead be advanced by other allies, including third party Member States and human rights organizations and mechanisms. For the HCT, public approaches may be considered also when they help communicate the positions and expertise of humanitarian actors to Afghan people and civil society actors, including women’s groups, in ways that can strengthen their credibility. Expert advice should be sought from those engaging most closely with the DFA and a fulsome risk assessment carried out to determine when and how more public approaches could be strategically utilized and related messages safely and effectively conveyed.

4. ADVOCACY RISK MANAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

Risk Management

Risk assessment and management efforts are critical to advancing protection-focused advocacy in Afghanistan. Such efforts must be premised on ‘do no harm’ considerations, and the particular and often gendered risks faced by local actors, who are often directly engaging with duty bearers on protection issues and more exposed to potential risks of retribution.

The primary responsibility for risk management continues to lie with the lead actors advancing on particular HCT CoP advocacy actions, as outlined in the Action Plan. The ISG’s role is to support key partners in:

- conducting relevant risk assessment and management efforts, analyzing and taking into account gendered risks and the need for conducting such assessment with diverse partners, including local actors;
- identifying ways for partners and allies to access needed supports and capacities with risk management within the HCT and beyond;
- flagging key challenges and risks to the HCT in a timely manner and galvanizing any needed collective efforts to support with risk mitigation. This includes assessing risks around women’s participation in the advocacy itself and balancing risks and women’s agency.

These risk management efforts should draw on the different relationships, capacities, operational profiles and risk tolerance levels of a diverse network of stakeholders. Given the severe discrimination and marginalized faced by women and girls in Afghanistan, the HCT is encouraged to ensure specific expert support from **GiHA, ACBAR and WAG** with risk assessment and management efforts to ensure they fully reflect gendered dimensions of risks and mitigating actions. Key actions for the HCT and ISG in managing risks related to its protection advocacy are included in **ANNEX**.

Risk assessments should consider both the likelihood and severity of a potential risk resulting from an advocacy action and delineate gendered impacts. Such assessments must consider both the risks of undertaking a given advocacy action, to be accompanied by relevant risk mitigation measures, as well as the risks of NOT undertaking advocacy actions, including in light of the potential impacts to the credibility and reputation of humanitarian actors. Equally, risk assessment to also assess impact on beneficiaries, specifically women and girls in Afghanistan context.

Participation and AAP

HCT advocacy efforts must remain fully informed by and grounded in the perspectives of the people and communities affected by the prioritized protection risks the CoP strategy seeks to address. This means ensuring advocacy priorities are informed by protection monitoring, assessments, focus group discussions and community consultations and dialogue on an ongoing basis, with such efforts requiring the meaningful engagement of women and girls, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. It also means tapping into and strengthening the entire feedback loop, including via existing collective and organizational Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and community engagement mechanisms, and identifying ways to regularly provide information and updates back to communities (including women and girls) in a gender responsive manner¹ and in appropriate ways to ensure they understand what the information they are providing is being used for, how different advocacy efforts are being advanced and to share where they may have concerns, feedback or desire for further engagement. Here again the agencies leading on a given HCT CoP advocacy action is responsible for ensuring such feedback loops are in place. HCT and ISG will engage the **AAP Working Group, GiHA and the WAG, along with Afghanistan Protection Cluster** for further guidance and support to help ensure communities are able to feed into, and get feedback on, advocacy efforts.

Governance Considerations

Key governance considerations in relation to advocacy efforts related to the HCT CoP Strategy will be managed by the ISG and are further outlined in **ANNEX**.

5. ADVOCACY PROBLEM, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

N.B. A fulsome analysis and prioritized protection risks are laid out in the HCT CoP Strategy.

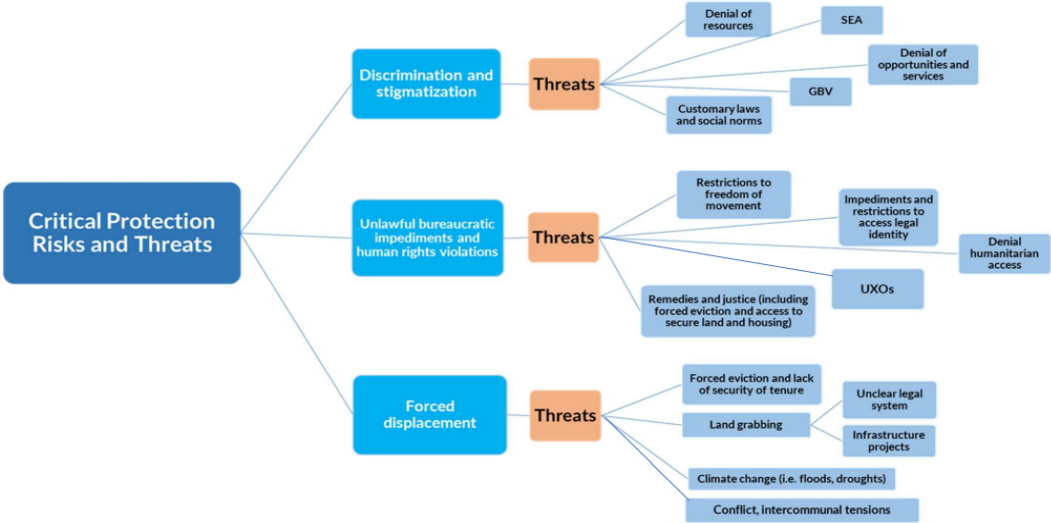
Advocacy Problem Statement & Theory of Change:

The prioritized protection risks identified in the HCT CoP Strategy reflect a range of ‘threats’ that drive and shape the exposure of civilians to related harms, including human rights violations, exclusion and violence. These threats are largely a result of discriminatory, inequitable, and unlawful policies and

¹ Some methods of reaching women are highlighted in OCHA’s 2022 report: “Engaging Marginalized Women in Afghanistan in Decision Making and Accountability”, participants universally cited female friends, family, and health workers as trustworthy and accessible feedback collectors... the usefulness of a telephone hotline for those who do not trust local leaders. Some women also listened to radio programming over their phones: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/engaging-marginalized-women-afghanistan-decision-making-and-accountability-findings-feedback-system-design-workshops-carolyn-davis-ocha-afghanistan-accountability-affected-people-advisor-april-2022>

practices of the DFA in Afghanistan, while some also reflect a degree of inaction on the part of DFA to stop or mitigate harm, particularly for certain populations. These threats as well as related vulnerabilities and capacities have highly gendered dimensions and impacts: women and girls are bearing the brunt of these severe protection risks and human rights violations, with their ability to access the most basic services, rights and freedoms are all largely erased.

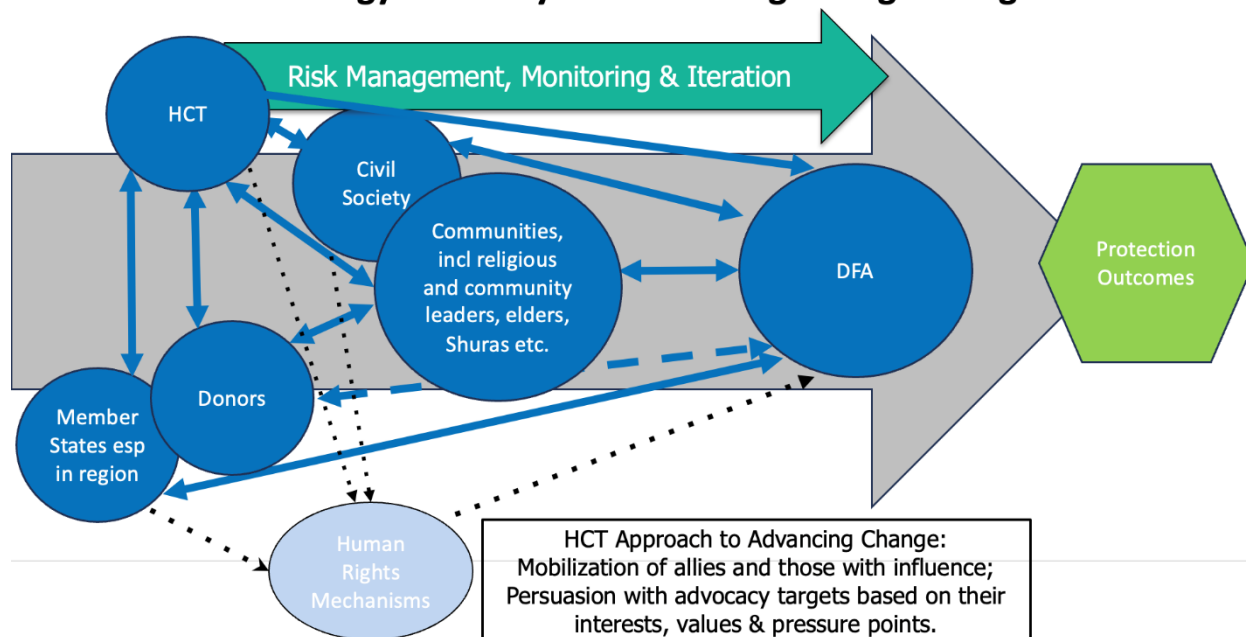
Diagram from HCT CoP Strategy: Critical Protection Risks and Threats



What is clear is the primary role of the DFA as the main duty bearer engaged in decision-making and action with respect to harmful policies and practices that are driving the protection risks outlined in the HCT CoP Strategy. The HCT thus believes a primary channel for change is through influencing the DFA, based on increased persuasion that links with their interest and values, and leverages multiple pressure points. Such persuasion must be advanced directly, via HCT members, as well as through mobilizing a range of allies, including third party member states (particularly in the region), donors and different religious and community leaders, with credibility and influence with the DFA at sub-national and national levels. Considering the role many communities themselves play in implementing formal and informal restrictive and discriminatory measures that are driving protection risks, community engagement, sensitization and mobilization, particularly working with and through local actors, remains vital.

If the HCT is able to mobilize and work with a diverse range of influential allies, including third party Member States, donors and community/religious leaders, to sensitize, pressure and ultimately persuade the DFA of the benefits of stopping the implementation of harmful policies and practices and enabling greater access to humanitarian assistance and protection, in line with cultural and religious values, then the identified protection risks will be reduced and protection outcomes strengthened for crisis-affected people in Afghanistan.

HCT CoP Strategy: Pathways to Advancing Change in Afghanistan



Advocacy Goal:

To advance collaborative advocacy efforts that contribute to changing the harmful behaviours, practices and policies of the DFA in support of reduced protection risks and strengthened protection outcomes, including through equitable access to services and humanitarian assistance, reduced exposure to violence and abuse, strengthened human rights and the realization of durable solutions.

Cross-Cutting Advocacy Objectives (related actions are included in the HCT CoP Action Plan):

- DFA has a strengthened understanding of humanitarian and protection action and how it aligns with their interests and cultural/religious values and how it benefits Afghan people.
- DFA has increased willingness, based on sensitization and persuasive pressure, to stop implementation of harmful policies and practices (including early and forced marriage of girls, child labour, other forms of gender based violence) and advance ones that support protection for people experiencing the greatest protection risks/needs including most at risk groups such as women, people living with disabilities.
- Community leaders, shuras and other influential decision-makers at community and local levels are sensitized, supportive of and mobilized to advance advocacy in support of protection outcomes for Afghan women, men, girls and boys.
- Donors and third-party member states remove bureaucratic impediments and enable humanitarian partners to further advance principled engagement and technical assistance with

the DFA in support of protection-focused advocacy and aims and with women's staff participation as a core principle.

- Donors and third-party member states further leverage their humanitarian diplomacy, engagement and influence with the DFA to advance on key protection concerns and actions.
- HCT has helped to advance and amplify advocacy efforts with diverse civil society actors, including women's rights organizations and leaders, youth groups, organizations of persons with disabilities and other change-makers working towards shared protection and advocacy objectives.
- HCT has established shared positioning and commitments on key protection principles, including re. women's equal participation, which HCT members are accountable for implementing and which support effective advocacy with DFA.

HCT CoP Strategy Objectives & Related Advocacy Objectives:

HCT CoP Strategy - Specific objective #1: discrimination and stigmatization against women, girls, and other vulnerable groups is reduced through improving the safety and dignity of all women, girls, and ethnic as well as religious minorities.

Advocacy Objectives (related actions included in the HCT CoP Action Plan):

- The DFA reduces restrictions on the delivery of and access to humanitarian assistance and protection, including for affected women and girls and other minority groups, and reduces related restrictions on protection actors. This includes delivery of assistance by women (humanitarian workers).
- Community leaders enable equitable access to dedicated protection assistance and services, particularly for women and girls.
- The DfA allows specific services enhancing women's protection including but not limited to women safe and friendly spaces, women centers, etc.
- Donors develop a common position on the importance of women's participation and leadership in all aspects of the humanitarian response and advance related efforts via diplomatic channels, in consultation with the HCT.
- Donors to ensure continuous adequate, sustained and flexible funding for more comprehensive protection-related service provision that helps to dispel misconceptions and demonstrate the benefits to communities.
- HCT develops and implements common positions and commitments on the importance of women's participation and leadership in all aspects of the humanitarian response that directly feeds into operational positioning as well as advocacy messaging and engagement with the DFA. This is done in close coordination with GiHA, HAWG and WAG.
- **Link to GEEWG Strategy, especially: Priority area 3- enabling safe gendered access for most vulnerable particularly women and girls to access humanitarian assistance and longer term programming**
 - Identify and address main constraints impeding humanitarian partners' ability to engage with relevant stakeholders for securing exemptions for women humanitarian workers
 - HCT engagement plan as part of the HCT Humanitarian Access Strategy to include specific initiatives to improve women's access to humanitarian assistance.

- Mainstream advocacy for women’s participation in humanitarian action at all stages of engagement and negotiations **(also included in Humanitarian Access Strategy)**.

HCT CoP Strategy - Specific objective #2: The engagement to address unlawful bureaucratic impediments and human rights violations is enhanced.

Advocacy objectives (related actions included in the HCT CoP Action Plan):

- The DFA implements measures that decrease barriers to/improve access to civil documentation (birth registration, legal identity), including reduced costs, streamlined and clear procedures, and easier physical access to relevant centers.
 - Advances a particular focus on gaining exemptions and measures to support access to civil documentation for IDPs and returnees, women and women-headed households, persons with disabilities and those forcibly evicted.
 - Additional gendered barriers in accessing documentation: In order to receive disability-related social benefits, eligible persons with disabilities must obtain a disability identity card. However, women with disabilities face additional barriers in accessing authorities/offices due to the existing movement restrictions and additional bias and discrimination they are subject to. Hence, women with disabilities are facing additional barriers in accessing social welfare.
- The DFA implements measures to help safeguard HLP rights, including for women and displaced and returning Afghan people, including proactive land dispute resolutions.
- The DFA allows for the progressive ability of women lawyers to resume their work and practice.
- The DFA allows social mobilization/ community outreach activities.
- The DFA to enable further access to humanitarian actors for community mine risk education, support further entry points at community levels for risk education and to specialized mine action organizations to conduct specialized ordnance removal activities.
- The DFA allows community engagements for health issues including mental health, GBV and access to reproductive health services.
- **Link to Humanitarian Access Strategy - Key Objective I: Strengthening advocacy and leadership on humanitarian access through a collective and strategic engagement by the humanitarian community with key access stakeholders and Key Objective IV: Ensuring the access/participation of affected populations, particularly women and girls, in all stages of the humanitarian programming (action plan: Provide support to partners and women led organizations facing challenges in upholding women staff’s participation (support to negotiations and adaptations).**
 - Identify and map potential stakeholders with whom HCT, Regional Humanitarian Teams (RHT), and cluster partners (both at national and sub-national level) need to establish or strengthen relationships for improved humanitarian access.
 - Identify and address main constraints impeding humanitarian partners’ ability to engage with relevant stakeholders.
 - Socialize DfA at the national, provincial and district levels on principled humanitarian programming and access.
 - As part of Key objective 3 - Map gendered access barriers for women recipients of assistance, including contextualized challenges in different regions, and challenges for most at risk groups (women headed households, adolescent girls, elderly women, etc.).

HCT CoP Strategy - Specific objective #3: Durable solutions for forcibly displaced and returning Afghan people are found and operationalized.

Advocacy objectives (related actions included in the HCT CoP Action Plan):

- DFA adopts inclusive land management/reform plans at regional and national levels.
- DFA removes restrictions on women working in women's GBV in displacement and support services to allow these services to support returnee women and girls who have experienced GBV.
- DFA halts forced evictions and alternative approaches and supports, including transitional shelter, restitution/compensation, are operationalized, in line with basic rights.
- DFA enables specific outreach to most at risk returnee women and girls including for engagement in livelihoods and protection related activities/services.
- DFA adopts disaster risk reduction plans at regional and national levels.
- DFA enables and advances peacebuilding and social cohesion efforts across communities and further supports inclusive service delivery
- Community leaders and influencers are supportive of peacebuilding and social cohesion efforts and address exclusion from services.
- DFA enables skills development and livelihood opportunities, especially for young people
- Neighboring countries are engaged to limit harmful practices with deportations and returns.
- Donors and member states engage with DFA on the benefits of durable solutions and how these can be supported.
- Donors to provide more support for resilience interventions and initiatives aimed at mitigating socio-economic marginalization of particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. safety nets, climate action) and demonstrating benefits of such approaches with DFA.

6. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - Risk Management

Collective risk management that is grounded in gendered and inclusive risk assessments, and the design of risk reduction and mitigation efforts involving a diverse range of partners and allies is foundational in advancing HCT CoP advocacy efforts.

Given the role the ISG plays in supporting the overall coordination and implementation of the HCT CoP Strategy, it also plays a leading role in supporting the overall coordination and implementation of risk management efforts.

Specific processes and actions the ISG will manage in relation to the HCT CoP advocacy actions include:

- For the ISG to coordinate with agencies leading on advocacy actions a clear risk assessment and management plan, with gendered considerations and impacts outlined.
 - Lead agencies and partners to consult regularly with and provide feedback to local actors/partners on potential and actual risks associated with engagement and advocacy towards DFA and other advocacy targets. ISG and partners to **GiHA as well as HAWG** for expert guidance on identifying and managing gendered dimensions of advocacy risks.

- **AAP Working Group** and the **Protection Cluster** to support with the inclusion of protection advocacy related risks and considerations in relevant assessments and feedback mechanisms.
 - Use ISG meetings to update on ongoing risk-related considerations including based on inputs from partners, delineate and update on needed risk management efforts, to identify emergent risks or challenges to bring to HCT attention for information and/or action.
- For the ISG to flag emergent and actual risks and challenges associated with protection advocacy efforts of members and partners/allies in conducting protection advocacy to the HCT. This includes via the ISG updates at HCT meetings, as well as via direct engagement with the Humanitarian Coordinator when more urgent action is required.
 - ISG co-chairs to provide regular updates on advocacy actions and risk management considerations to HCT via monthly meetings and via bilateral engagement with HC, as needed.
 - ISG to monitor agreed on risk management action points and follow-up as needed to ensure implementation.
 - For **UNAMA Human Rights Section** to proactively work with the ISG in identifying available support and resources for partners (e.g. additional security supports, safe houses etc.) who face particular risks related to their advocacy and engagement so that this information and related resources can be quickly utilized when needed. UNAMA and ISG to identify capacity-building needs and priorities for partners with respect to risk management and bring forward to HCT and other relevant actors for support.

ANNEX 2 - Governance Process

The ISG will play a key role in coordinating and overseeing HCT CoP Advocacy efforts while identified lead agencies are responsible for driving forward collaborative implementation.

Relevant governance considerations for the ISG in this role include:

- ISG meetings to include a standing agenda item on advocacy that will touch on updates on implementation and progress of advocacy actions; identifying emergent advocacy priorities and risks/challenges, coordinating with partners on needed actions and decisions to take forward to HCT, as relevant.
- Cross-cutting considerations with such monitoring will include:
 - Discussion on the advocacy action and how it is contributing to HCT CoP Strategy and aligned with advocacy roadmap
 - Reflection on measures needed or in place to support participation/accountability with communities and advance engagement with local partners, women's rights organizations, community leaders etc.
- Periodic revision and adaptation of HCT CoP Action Plan's advocacy related elements based on emergent learnings, contextual developments, risk considerations and partner capacities.

- Monitoring and contribution analysis – developing reporting template that partners can use to provide updates on relevant advocacy actions and outcomes, and identify additional confidential channels for sharing more sensitive advocacy actions.
- Periodic reviews of current advocacy efforts and practices-to see what works, in what contexts and lessons for improvement.

ANNEX 3 - Advocacy targets and stakeholder mapping (to be developed in Q1 2025)

To be developed by ISG/HCT members to help identify priority advocacy targets, based on the HCT CoP objectives, what power they have over relevant decisions, which other actors have influence with these targets, potential blockers and potential allies and partners to mobilize in advancing shared advocacy aims.

To link with **Humanitarian Access WG** stakeholder mapping efforts:

Build on HA Strategy action - Identify and map potential stakeholders with whom HCT, Regional Humanitarian Teams (RHT), and cluster partners (both at national and sub-national level) need to establish or strengthen relationships for improved humanitarian access.

- Include DFA/line ministries at national level and provincial levels, member states, especially those in the region, and humanitarian donors
- include religious and community leaders
- Link to Action Plan and particular activities/timelines

ANNEX 3 - Shared framing of protection messages (to be further developed in Q1 2025)

To be developed by ISG/HCT members, leveraging existing efforts with messaging and related framing, based on cultural and religious norms, by different humanitarian, human rights and development actors as they engage with the DFA. This will involve consultations with the WAG and other local Afghan women's groups.

These shared protection messages will be utilized by HCT members in advancing relevant advocacy efforts with the DFA at local, provincial and national levels, with further tailoring based on particular targets/audiences.

These shared messages for DFA will aim to:

- help unpack protection concepts and terminology, and counter misperceptions of protection;
- propose ways to frame protection-focused messages in ways that integrate or reference cultural and religious norms, Islamic teachings and localized understandings of protection.

// ENDS //