**Global Protection Forum 2025**
**Concept Note**

**Session 4: Food security and protection sectors: working together to reduce the protection risks that drive needs**
*Thursday 13 November, 13.00-14.30 CET*
Lead/Co-Lead: IASC Community of Practice on Centrality of Protection, including InterAction, WFP, FAO and the Global Protection Cluster

**Background**

The correlation between food insecurity and violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law ('protection risks') is self-evident: according to the Global Report on Food Crises 2025, in 2024, more than half of people affected by acute food insecurity (IPC 3 and above) – 139.8 million – were in situations of armed conflict and generalized violence, with many such contexts characterized by widespread and systematic violations of people's basic rights. In non-conflict contexts, food insecurity driven by the effects of climate change, animal and plant pests and diseases is often compounded by existing inequalities and entrenched discrimination. Whatever the cause, once food insecure, people are exposed to further violations of their rights in what often becomes a vicious cycle of violence, abuse and destitution. Therefore, to address today's increasingly high levels of food insecurity effectively, food security actors must understand and mitigate the protection risks that are driving food insecurity and those that result from it. This requires a more integrated approach and far closer collaboration between food security and protection actors – at an organizational level, inter-cluster/sector level and at a global level.

The IASC's Centrality of Protection policy and new Benchmarks offer the operational framework for this more integrated approach. There are already steps towards operationalizing this, with some positive examples from individual organizations, of inter-cluster/sectoral collaboration in specific contexts, increased dialogue between the two global clusters and collaboration on advocacy in the framework of UNSC Resolution 2417. But there are also key challenges in bringing together these highly technical areas of intervention, including different language, operational pressures, etc.

The current funding environment and reform process present both a challenge and an opportunity to scale up the positive collaborations and more integrated approaches happening at field level. Better quality funding, greater political support, and tougher accountability are required from donors to both incentivize and support this approach. Clear and consistent commitments from organizations' leadership are necessary to ensure staff understand this is a priority and that they can access the organizational resources necessary to deliver on this. These and other actions are now critical to ensure that more integrated work on food security and protection becomes the default.

**Objective**

The session will focus on exploring how food security and protection actors can work together to identify and address the protection risks that drive food security needs – demonstrating how the Centrality of Protection works in practice. Discussions will showcase positive practice examples of intersectoral collaboration and programming in a range of contexts, including situations of deliberate deprivation; the challenges faced; and what actions are required to strengthen this way of working and achieve positive protection and food security outcomes. The session will provide opportunity to learn from different actors across the humanitarian sector.

**Guiding questions**

- What is the rationale for integrating protection and food security responses, including collective/joint working between food security and protection actors?
- What positive examples can we learn from? What protection and food security outcomes can be achieved, even in the most challenging contexts?
- What are the common barriers to greater collaboration/joint working between these two sectors – at organizational, inter-cluster and other levels?
- What actions need to be taken at organizational, cluster, and system levels to secure more consistent integration and collaboration or joint programming?

**Format and Speakers**

The session is structured around a panel of senior level speakers – each making individual remarks and then engaging in a moderated discussion. The seniority of speakers is key to demonstrating the strategic value and commitment from the protection and food security sectors to working together to address both food security needs and the protection risks that are driving/compounding those needs.

**Agenda**

| Time | Component and Guiding Questions | Speakers |
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| Moderator: Victoria Metcalfe-Hough, IASC Community of Practice | | |
| 13:00 – 13:05 | *What is the rationale for integrating protection and food security responses, including collective/joint working between food security and protection actors?*<br>*Why is it even more important now amid the Humanitarian Reset?* | Edward O'Dwyer, UNHCR Representative, CAR |
| 13.05– 13.15 | *How can different types of food security interventions support protection outcomes?* | Maxwell Sibhensana, Deputy Director, Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO |

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| 13:15 – 13:22 | *What lessons can be learned from operational partners, especially local/national actors, about more integrated protection and food security programming responses?* | Medoun Bathily, Project Manager, Action Mopti (Mali) |
| 13:22-13:35 | *Q and A* | |
| 13:35-13:42 | *What are the positive practices and key challenges to working across food security and protection?* | Ross Smith, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response, WFP |
| 13:42-13:50 | *What lessons can be learned from operational partners, especially local/national actors, about more integrated protection and food security programming responses?* | Hind Al Taif, Khartoum Women's Emergency Response Room |
| 13:50 – 14:00 | *What is the role of donors and member states in supporting more integrated food security and protection responses?* | Anne-Sophie Laenkholm, ECHO |
| 14:00 – 14.25 | *Moderated discussion among panelists and involving Q and A/comments from participants in the room/online* | |
| 14.25 – 14.30 | *Closing remarks* | Erin Weir, Director of Protection, InterAction (IASC Co-Champion) |