



Global Protection Cluster

**SUMMARY OF THE
GPC ROUNDTABLE
ON PREPAREDNESS
FOR PROTECTION
IN THE CONTEXT OF
CLIMATE CHANGE
AND DISASTER
DISPLACEMENT**

October 2020



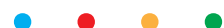


BACKGROUND



Preventing and preparing for internal displacement during armed conflict is notoriously difficult. In comparison, the predictable, cyclical or slow-onset nature or geographic location of many hazards, including climate related hazards, such as hurricane season, volcanic eruptions or droughts, means that much can be done to avoid disaster displacement in the first place or reduce the risk of displacement through disaster risk reduction (DRR), preparedness, anticipatory action approaches¹, climate change adaptation and development measures that address the underlying causes of displacement.

¹ Anticipatory action approaches (forecast-based early action, forecast-based financing, and early warning early action), can be distinguished from other humanitarian, disaster risk reduction and preparedness practices as they rely on weather and other forecasts to trigger funding for concrete, pre-determined actions prior to a shock or before acute impacts are felt. – Source: L. Weingärtner, T. Pforr, & E. Wilkinson. The evidence base on Anticipatory Action. Retrieved from https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000110236/download/?_ga=2.127818639.327060660.1604582714-1129571268.1604582714



AIM



The aim of the Roundtable was to bring together experts in protection and climate change as well as field examples for a discussion on good practices. This Roundtable was jointly organized by colleagues from the GBV AoR, GPC, IOM, NRC and UNHCR. The organizers discussed the need for greater involvement by the field protection clusters and AoRs in preparedness efforts, including necessary preparedness measures in their protection strategies and respective operations. The conclusions from the event will inform the development of specific guidance on the role of the field protection clusters and AoRs in preparedness efforts on protection and measures in their operations.



SCOPE



The organizers of the Roundtable discussion identified experts and operations in the field with experience in preparedness and disaster risk reduction. According to the IDMC GRID report 2020, around 1,900 disasters triggered 24.9 million new displacements across 140 countries and territories. This is the highest figure recorded since 2012 and three times the number of conflict displacements.

I. Why is localization important? An example – Afghanistan

The Senior ProCap Adviser with UNHCR Afghanistan, explained that Afghanistan is one of the countries worldwide deeply affected both by conflict and the effects of climate change. In such contexts, it is important to link the humanitarian response with development and localization efforts. Humanitarian responses often only focus on displacement (refugees, IDPs), neglecting some of the most vulnerable people. While it is important to look at displacement, those who cannot move and are “immobile” are sometimes even more vulnerable when a climate incident occurs. It is essential that protection actors focus on those most vulnerable to climate incidents, rather than basing their response on the displacement itself. A detailed country analysis is needed to better understand the context and the protection risks – and communities must be involved in the preparedness, planning and implementation phases, which is key for localization.

Protection issues around climate impacts in Afghanistan include:

- The lack of a regional framework that responds to weather events cross-border.
- The crucial need to focus on the most vulnerable when looking at protection, as they are often the most susceptible to climate incidents (e.g. in Afghanistan often women, children, persons with disabilities, poorest, older persons).
- The neglect of “immobile” individuals and families who cannot move during a crisis.
- Some governments do not see the added value of a protection cluster. Moreover, some officials do not believe that the Protection Cluster has sufficient resources to be involved in concrete efforts and therefore do not want to engage with the cluster.



II. How do you mainstream protection activities in DRR? An example – Burundi

Two IOM experts reported that Burundi is particularly affected by disasters linked to natural hazards which are the leading cause of displacement. Up to 46,000 people were affected by the recent floods in April and May 2020, which led to the displacement of 17,792 people in 3 IDP sites. In July/August of 2020, the IOM –DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) sector lead in Burundi conducted a protection assessment. One of the main conclusions of the analysis was that by mainstreaming protection into DRR work and by working on DRR with different actors, it is possible to reduce protection risks. The analysis further identified the lessons learned regarding informing affected populations of available resources, but also concluded that protection actors have little knowledge about what can be done to enhance disaster risk reduction. The survey about IDP return intentions identified a cyclical situation in which people have issues accessing their places of origin before the displacement and lack means of economic activities; altogether causing them to leave. Consequently, there is little resilience to disasters. The DRR teams aim to deal with displacement before it happens.

The key recommendations were drafted in terms of how to inform DRR actors' work and how to work with the communities before the onset of a disaster:

- Ensure that existing coordination structures integrate protection into disaster preparedness. As part of this strategy, it is also necessary to link DRR and protection actors at national and provincial level, and make sure that the different actors communicate with each other.
- There is an urgent need for capacity building of DRR actors on protection issues and a need to mainstream DRR into protection activities.
- Conduct consistent data collection on and in consultation with disaster affected populations or populations at high risk.
- Strengthen and develop referral pathways for different scenarios. It is indeed important not just to mitigate risks at community level but also to ensure the involvement of all vulnerable groups.
- The need to increase accountability to affected populations – so as to receive feedback to inform the plans.
- Create contingency plans for response to disasters – integrating protection and concrete operational guidance. Additionally, it is important to make sure that all types of vulnerable people are involved in the contingency plans, even community level actors.
- Conduct disaster preparedness community sensitization for protection objectives.

How to ensure that protection is strengthened for people at risk of displacement? An example – Mozambique

Main protection issues in a context of disaster and climate change:

An NRC consultant recounted that many organizations and protection agencies operating in Mozambique are focusing on the most “visible” protection issues, while they may be neglecting other “invisible” concerns affecting children, women and men, such as the prevalence of violence and exploitation. In addition, there may be barriers for individuals to reporting violence and accessing services.

The speaker also described the challenges faced by displaced women who are being limited in their rights. For example, women’s economy in Mozambique relies on agriculture, i.e. women account for over 87% of the labour force in agriculture, but only 23% have access to the legal tool ([DUAT](#)) that provides the right to use and benefit from the land they work on. He argued that protection agencies should take into account the challenges that displaced women may face and the need for protection agencies to provide better services in solving legal and protection issues that they may experience in relation to disaster and climate change.

From his experience in Mozambique, the consultant advocated for:

- More detailed and transparent evaluation and assessments that reflect the diversity of the community structures.
- The protection agencies should enable a consolidated and comprehensive approach to facilitate more realistic assessments to ensure an effective protection response to disasters and climate change.
- Ensuring that tools and mechanisms are in place to improve the collaboration between national protection clusters and local actors to better address climate change and disasters.



IV. Governance, Localization and Data: An example – the Pacific

The Head of the UNDRR office in Fiji believes that disaster and climate risk reduction are two sides of the same coin since the end goal is the same. He explained that it is important to understand the risk, capacity and vulnerabilities which address both disaster risk reduction and climate change. It is necessary to approach risk management in the context of climate change from a perspective of multi-hazards, developing much more agile and adaptive measures: e.g. Cyclone Harold in April 2020, led to a question about how agencies balance the need of taking people to safe centers and the need to keep social distancing due to COVID-19 measures. They also had to address protection concerns such as the rise in gender-based violence, an increase in intimate partner violence for women during quarantine and figure out how to reach out to girls and women who were forced to stay with their abusers during the lockdown measures. A third dilemma was related to the provision of international assistance in vulnerable times when strict border protections are put in place.

- Data- it is crucial for understanding and providing support. The more we understand the risks of vulnerable communities, the better we can respond.
- Governance- Governance mechanisms and resources must be fit for purpose and adapted to future legislative frameworks for better disasters' response.
- Localization- It is necessary to look at how to build a currency of trust at local level, involving the communities themselves through participation and consultation.

V. Key Points and Conclusions

1. It is vital to integrate protection into Disaster Risk Reduction as experts concluded during the roundtable.
2. It is important to leverage the work done by existing coordination structures and work closely with other clusters in the sectors as a whole and at the regional level.
3. It is necessary to include local actors into coordination structures and be open and transparent about the processes implemented. Communication and messaging play a key role especially in reference to the localization agenda.
4. It is essential to take a holistic approach to policy making to address protection risks in relation to climate change.
5. It is important to use and promote already available tools on the topic such as the “Words into Action Guidelines on disaster displacement” from UNDRR², Emergency Response Preparedness Guidelines³ and IASC Standard Operating Procedures for Early Action to El Nino/La Nina Episodes⁴.
6. It is necessary to emphasize and be aware of the role of field protection clusters and AoRs in ensuring the incorporation of protection concerns into disaster preparedness measures.
7. It is essential to develop specific guidance on preparedness on protection for field protection clusters and AORs.

² Words into Action Guidelines–Disaster Displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience, 2019 [Words into Action Guidelines](#)

³ IASC Emergency Response Preparedness Guidelines, July 2015, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/node/129104>

⁴ Inter-agency SOPs for Early Action to El Niño/La Niña Episodes developed in 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/inter-agency-sops-early-action-el-ni-ola-ni-episodes>

