

PROTECTION CLUSTER – YEMEN
STRATEGY 2011

- final -

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I. Introduction

This Strategy arose from a desire by the Protection Cluster members to define and strengthen the work of the Protection Cluster. As such, it constitutes the basis for the coordinated effort of all cluster members to improve the protection of the displaced and returning populations and their host communities, as well as conflict-affected and other persons of concern throughout Yemen.

This strategy was developed jointly by all members of the Cluster. In particular, the Cluster met for a half-day workshop on 8 February to decide on the priorities, activities and coordination structure of the Cluster. Following the discussion, two drafts were produced and shared for comment within the wider protection community based in Yemen.

At the same time, this strategy is intended to be a living document. More to the point, the Cluster's priorities need to reflect the situation on the ground and the protection concerns at hand at any given moment; the strategy will be thus reviewed and revised on a regular basis, and at least at the start of every year.

II. Background

Yemen is one the poorest countries in the world, ranked by the UNDP Human Development Index in 2009 as the 140th poorest country on the list of 182 States. According to a survey done by the World Food Program (WFP), nearly half of the population lives on less than two dollars a day. Some 7.5 million Yemenis, or over 32 percent of the population, are estimated as food-insecure; and, within this group, 2.5 million people, or 11.8 percent of the population, can be categorized as being severely food-insecure.¹ The rate of poverty, according to the UN Humanitarian Response Plan 2011, increased from 35 percent of the population in 2006 to 43 percent in 2010.²

Yemen has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world, with 13.2 percent of children between 6 and 59 months wasted and 55.7 percent stunted. The adult literacy rate stands at 46 percent, with a wide gender disparity: the rate of women adult illiteracy is estimated at 65 percent, men's at 27 percent.

Furthermore, parts of the country remain outside the effective governmental control and in the state of protracted conflict. The northern governorate of Sa'ada, with the exception of the center of Sa'ada city and a few other areas, is controlled by the al-Houthi groups, although the Qatar-sponsored cease-fire of February 2010 between the al-Houthi and the Government of Yemen (GoY) seems to be holding most of the time.³ Occasional fighting with the use of heavy artillery breaks out between tribes loyal to the government and the al-Houthi, causing casualties to the population caught in between.

¹ WFP: *Yemen Comprehensive Food Security Survey*. March 2010, p. 14.

² UN Humanitarian Response Plan 2011, p. 7

³The 22 point agreement was signed by the Government of Yemen and the representatives of the Al-Houthi groups in August 2010, under the auspices of the Qatar Government mediation committee.

Parts of other governorates of Amran, al-Jawf and Hadramawt are firmly in control of tribes. The central government presence is larger in those areas where the governing tribes are loyal to the ruling establishment. In the south, the government is on occasion challenged by southern separatist movements, occasionally erupting into full-scale armed clashes with concomitant casualties, property damage and displacement.

A spate of recent anti-government demonstrations, mostly in Sana'a, Amran and Aden, called for a change of government and the removal of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. At the writing of this Strategy, the demonstrations have, for the most part, been contained by the government with limited incidences of violence and casualties. To appease the opposition, the president has enacted a series of measures, for instance, increases in the salaries of military officials and civil servants, decreases in property taxes, and a vow not to stand for reelection in 2013.

Yemen is a party to a number of international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as of 1987; International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as of 1987; Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as of 1990 and its two optional protocols on the sale of children as of 2004 and the involvement of children in armed conflict as of 2007, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) as of 1991; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) as of 1972; and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as of 1984.

a. Cluster system

The cluster system⁴⁵ in Yemen was established by Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in response to the widespread recognition of the fact that the six years of conflict in the north of the country – the last of which was the so-called 6th War of August 2009 to February 2010 – had created a humanitarian crisis with over 340,000 displaced persons, of whom 50,000 were children between the ages of 6 and 14. The destruction of basic services, landmines and the situation of protracted insecurity have severely affected most people across the northern parts of the country.

The humanitarian response of early 2010 sought to support primarily displaced persons, recognizing the immediacy of their needs. Over the course of the past year (2010), humanitarian organizations have begun to assess the needs of other populations in light of the socio-economic difficulties plaguing Yemen more generally. In addition, the spontaneous homeward movement of many of those displaced prior to February 2010 are forcing aid organizations to expand their assistance programs into the areas of return and the receiving/host communities.

The Protection Cluster has too more recently started to expand its definition of vulnerabilities into other categories of population: women and children amongst the displaced, return and hosting communities, migrants and victims of human

⁴ The survey was not done in the governorates of Sa'ada and al-Jawf.

⁵ Nine clusters are: Food and Agriculture, Protection, WASH, CCCM/Shelter, Health, Early Recovery, Nutrition, Logistics and Education.

trafficking, marginalized and other conflict-affected persons. To this end, the cluster has expanded its geographic scope to cover the entire country.

III. Analysis of protection issues in Yemen

a. Displacement and return

At present, the Executive Unit of the GoY in collaboration with UNHCR maintains the database of some 309,703 displaced and 20,298 returnees. About 15% of those are in seven formal camps (of which eight are in the Sa'ada governorate; one camp in Khaiwan, Amran⁶; and three camps in Mazraq, Hajjah) and a vast majority of some 85% in eight informal settlements (including seven settlements in Sa'ada and one in al Jawf), in urban and semi-urban areas in rented apartments or squatting in makeshift shelters, mosques, or open spaces in rural and urban areas in Sa'ada, Hajjah, Al Jawf, Amran, and Sana'a. The registered displaced persons are thus the persons displaced during the Sa'ada wars.

Displacement in the south of the country is mostly of temporary nature resulting from natural disasters or armed clashes between the government forces and southern separatist movements. The needs and the protection issues in the south are different from those for the north of the country.

During one of the IDP protection workshops organized by UNHCR, the following protection issues affecting IDPs and returnees were identified: lack of documentation affecting access to services and employment, lack of physical security in the area of displacement and especially in the areas of potential return, gender based and domestic violence, family separation, obstructed access to services such as education and health, food insecurity, problems securing a shelter or pay the rent, inability to procure basics necessary for life in dignity and inability to return to the place of origin due to lack of physical security and landmines. These protection concerns of IDPs are interconnected.

Where the return is taking place on a more substantial scale, such as to the area of Minzala where half of the pre-war population of 6,000 has already returned, the returnees are finding no support system in place: houses, wells, schools and health centers are completely or partially destroyed and without equipment. In Minzala, for instance, one of the elementary schools is used as a Yemeni army outpost.

b. Lack of security and deprivation of liberty

Clashes and fighting continue to occasionally flare across the country, in particular in the Sa'ada governorate and several southern governorates with strong separatist movements.

Some ten thousand people fled the fighting between the government forces and al-Qa'eda-associated group in al-Hutah in the Shabwa governorate in September 2010. On January 16, 2011, the fighting broke between the al-Hirak and

⁶ The camp was closed on 28 February, 2011

government forces around the town of Habilayn in the Lahj governorate, with reports of some displacement. On February 2, the UN assessment team was able to carry out a brief and low-key assessment mission. Similarly, occasional clashes are recorded in the Sa'ada governorate, along the *separation lines*, leading to civilian casualties and displacement. There is very little immediate information on these occurrences.

Thousands of people have allegedly been arrested as a result of the Sa'ada conflict by each side, of whom some remain in detention.

c. Access to services and assistance

Disruption in registration of the displaced persons in September 2010, as well as extremely poor state of public services severely obstructs the enjoyment of economic rights by many people in Yemen, especially the displaced. Hospitals and education facilities are under-funded and severely lacking in qualified personnel and equipment across the country; such as they are, basic services are still too expensive for a large segment of the Yemeni population, including many IDPs.

Access to services and assistance is impeded also by the lack of humanitarian space, i.e., denial of access to affected areas and populations. The UN is currently discussing the possibility for the GoY to sign on to the Humanitarian Declaration setting out the principle of unimpeded humanitarian access at all times. The Declaration was signed by an Al-Houthi representative on the occasion of the visit of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the European Commissioner for International Cooperation to Sa'ada. On his part, the Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs sent to the UN a communication, noting the government's commitment to continue to provide physical protection to aid convoys to IDP camps.

d. Landmines

In 2004, the Landmine Impact Survey⁷ identified 594 communities in Yemen infected with landmines. In the ensuing 6 years, more minefields have been laid as well as identified. In 1998, Yemen ratified the Ottawa or Mine-Ban Treaty, and commenced its mine action programme. Since then, the National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) was set up in June 1998 to provide policy support and act as a steering body for mine action activities, and the Yemen Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) was set up in 1999 as a national mine action implementing body. The Government has also trained over a thousand deminers; it completed destruction of its national stockpile of anti-personnel landmines in compliance with Article 7 in April 2002, and promulgated legislation in accordance with Article 9 of the Treaty.⁸

Human suffering and economic losses due to landmines and UXOs is quite likely significant, albeit not systematically recorded. According to some reports, the most frequent victims are farmers and herders (including children) who come across Explosive Remnants of War in the course of their duties, as well as children who are

⁷ UNDP: *Five Year National Strategic Mine-Action Plan for Yemen 2004-2009*, June 2004

⁸ Electronic Mine Information Network: Yemen: <http://www.mineaction.org/country.asp?c=27>

oblivious to the risks of ERWs. As the return begins to intensify, the casualties are likely to increase.

e. Individuals and groups of particular concern

I. Children

In May 2010, the Child Protection Sub-Cluster commissioned the Interagency Comprehensive Child Protection Assessment in conflict-affected governorates in northern Yemen. The report estimated that children constituted at least 20 percent of recruits in the al-Houthi armed group and at least 15 percent in the pro-government militia. Statistics concerning child trafficking are equally grim: 329 children were rescued from trafficking between January and June 2010. The survey also recorded instances of early marriage among the displaced communities⁹

II. Victims of sexual and gender based violence

There are few studies on the issue of sexual and gender based violence in Yemen. It is generally accepted that the issue of gender based violence is very sensitive and hence requires special attention.¹⁰ The acts of violence are difficult to investigate as they remain, for the victim and the perpetrator alike, the private affair confined to the family. Most of the victims of the gender-based violence appear to be women and at least in half of the documented cases, the perpetrators are family members.¹¹

The humanitarian organizations note that gender based violence becomes an especially pronounced problem among the displaced and vulnerable communities, where the displacement conditions create particularly conducive environment for violence.¹² The Interagency Comprehensive Child Protection Assessment recorded that 72 percent of girls and 67 percent of boys reported being physically assaulted; 9 percent of girls and 4 percent of boys reported being sexually abused; and at least 32 percent of girls were married before they turned 18 years. Girls were less likely to progress beyond basic schooling (and are thus often left illiterate) and were more likely to be kept in the family home for "safekeeping". Boys were more likely to be engaged in paid labor, including being recruited into armed activities. While girls are also recruited, that is frequently treated as a social taboo and is thus not spoken of. According to some reports, girls are recruited into armed forces through forced marriage. In some cases, fathers of displaced families marry off their daughters for economic advantage to increase the likelihood they will be fed; the girls are also sometimes married off as gifts to the caretakers of the displaced families. In some other cases, male caretakers swap their daughters in polygamous marriages. It is not uncommon that grooms are twenty or more years older than the child brides.

⁹ Interagency Comprehensive Child Protection Assessment in conflict-affected governorates in northern Yemen, Child Protection Sub-Cluster. Yemen (May 2010)

¹⁰ For instance, Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights in their study on honor crimes in Yemen reported that "the research team faced several technical difficulties while conducting the field surveys. At the first place, so many interviewees were not positively responsive: policy officers, judges and lawyers. Some of the interviewees dealt with the research questionnaire slightly with indifference. (Honor Crimes in Yemen - A Legal & Social Analysis on Violence Against Yemeni Women Pertaining to Honor, May 2005)

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The displaced communities are also more regularly frequented or attended to by international and protection workers trained to monitor and record incidence of violence and gender-based violence.

III. Marginalized communities (“al-akhdam”/“al-Muhamasheen”)

The *al-Muhamasheen* or *Al-Akhdam* (“marginalized” or “slaves”) are an Arabic-speaking Muslim community of some 500,000 people, residing dispersed in slums in the outskirts of Sana’a, Aden, Taiz, Lahj, Abyan, Hodeidah and Mukalla,¹³ with very limited access to basic services and in abject poverty. Discrimination against the group is faulted for their continued poverty and inability to access available basic services or employment. A number of the members of the Yemeni ‘marginalized’ community have been displaced in the conflict in the North and sheltered in one of the IDP camps in Mazraq.

IV. Migrants and victims of human trafficking

The number of migrants from Ethiopia passing through Yemen on the way to Saudi Arabia fluctuates. In October 2010, OCHA reported that around 3,000 Ethiopians may have been stranded in Haradh. Among these, some were forcefully returned from Saudi Arabia, others were hoping to get there. Many of them, however, appear to be sold into slavery, or are treated with utmost brutality, resulting in beatings, rape, burning and killing. The smuggling/trafficking gangs comprising Saudi, Yemeni, Somali and Ethiopian nationals, appear to operate with impunity. Victims of trafficking speak of slave-like and abusive conditions under which they are held in houses manned by smugglers/traffickers in the outskirts of Haradh. Interviewed victims - men, women and children - testify to frequent occurrences of rape, beatings and other inhumane treatment at the hands of the gangs.

IV. Protection Cluster approach and principles

Protection in the context of humanitarian emergency constitutes:

“all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or gender).”¹⁴

Stated differently, protection stands for those activities whose aim and purpose is to limit the risks to which civilian population is exposed during armed conflict or situations of violence, as well as any other kind of humanitarian crisis, man or

¹³ The ‘*marginalized community*’ may be descendants of Ethiopian invaders from the sixth century, forced ever since into the performance of menial jobs, such as sweeping and shoe-making. IRIN: [Yemen: Akhdam people suffer history of discrimination](#), 1 November 2005.

¹⁴ ICRC: *Strengthening Protection in War: A Search for Professional Standards*, Geneva, May 2001, pp. 28-37

nature-created; to defend their rights and to prevent or stop abuses or patterns of abuses they may be suffering.¹⁵

Protection is a legal responsibility that emphasizes the rights of all men, women, girls and boys. There is a corresponding obligation on the part of relevant authorities to respect, protect and fulfil such rights.

To this end, the Protection Cluster will aim to:

- **Identify violations of rights and protection gaps** throughout the country and **identify immediate remedies and solutions** where such are available;
- **Identify patterns of abuse** and in partnership with key national authorities **develop strategies and plans of action** to alleviate the effects of abuse;
- **Advocate** with heads of agencies, Humanitarian Country Team, and the Humanitarian Coordinator to mainstream protection activities into all programs and strategies;
- **Review** existing programs, practices and assessments against protection and human rights standards;
- **Engage in resource mobilization**, including through CAP, in coordinated and participatory manner;
- **Seek to foster a protective environment** where the rights of all men, women, girls and boys are respected, protected and fulfilled.

V. Cluster Action Plan

The strategy of the humanitarian response in Yemen in 2011 was set out in the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan of 2011 (YHRP 2011), which states the following:

The overall strategy of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in 2011 is to provide an environment for safe and healthy living for conflict-affected people until the situation allows for permanent resettlement and self-reliance, while providing a much more limited package of assistance (mainly food and nutrition) for vulnerable but non-conflict affected Yemenis in acute humanitarian need.¹⁶

Its three strategic objectives are identified as follows:

- **Life-saving assistance** (shelter/health care, nutrition, safe water, sanitation, food, and protection to people affected by violence, severe food insecurity and malnourishment and other acute humanitarian crisis)
- Ensure protective environment in order to address **early recovery need** and **durable solutions** for affected targeted populations
- Strengthen the **accountability** and **ability of government authorities and other key stakeholders... protection through capacity-building, information sharing and crisis management** with the aim of improving humanitarian response for all affected people.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ YHRP 2011, p.1

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 8-10

Taking into consideration the above strategy and strategic objectives, as well as the protection definition in the context of Yemen, the Protection Cluster (PC) as a whole with its associated protection working groups (PC WGs) has decided on the following priorities and activities:

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES
Displacement/Return	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to advocate for the adoption of the IDP National Strategy by GoY including on the right of choice for IDPs 2. Remain actively involved in all discussions concerning durable return solutions, to ensure their compliance with international standards and best practices 3. Advocate for community-based programming and assistance in place of individual assistance in a manner that is consistent with the Do No Harm Principles 4. Ensure the coordination and consistency of all profiling and mapping exercises with an emphasis on SGBV and child protection 5. Design capacity-development scheme for community protection networks in order to strengthen their vulnerability and protection monitoring 6. Engage a consultant to map out property issues and options for property/land recovery by returnees 7. Consolidate the registration data 	<p>1.1 PC/UNHCR</p> <p>2.1 PCWGs</p> <p>3.1 PC</p> <p>4.1 PC 4.2 PCWG</p> <p>5.1 PCWGs</p> <p>6.1 UNHCR</p> <p>7.1 Registration Task Force</p>
Threats to life, liberty and security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidate and develop protection monitoring tools on compliance with IHL and IHRL with the purpose of systematic recording of violations through the cluster and protection networks (focussing on child recruitment, effects of armed conflict on civilian populations, other abuses and violations of individuals and groups of concern) 2. Map existing protection capacities using the 3Ws matrix 3. Design training courses on IHRL/IHL and consider assisting with the development and integration of IHRL/IHL in national university curricula 4. Strengthen advocacy with GoY/HCT/HC 	<p>1.1 PC</p> <p>2.1 PC 3.1 PC+GPC¹⁸</p> <p>4.1 PC 4.2 UNHCR Rep</p>
Access to services and assistance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate for registration of the most vulnerable IDPs in the place of return, resettlement or displacement, as well as for recording the population movements 2. Advocate for community-based programming and assistance in lieu of individual assistance in a manner that is consistent with the Do No Harm Principles and promotes assistance according to the needs 3. Continuously review existing vulnerability criteria and their applicability 	<p>1.1 PC 1.2 UNHCR</p> <p>2.1 PC</p> <p>3.1 PC</p>

¹⁸ Global Protection Cluster

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. List basic services and service providers in the field in order to strengthen referral mechanisms. 5. Improve information-sharing concerning access to beneficiaries through advocacy 6. Coordinate activities concerning family tracing with ICRC 	<p>4.1 PCWGs</p> <p>5.1 PCWGs</p> <p>6.1 PCWGs</p>
Right to life in dignity (livelihood) -	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include the sharing of lessons across clusters with the view of facilitating a long term assistance approach 2. Advocate for expansion of livelihood-related activities, secure more funds 3. Advocate for access to Sa'ada governorate with GoY 4. Advocate to cluster/donors to shift from humanitarian to early recovery 5. Document best practices in livelihood related activities 6. Conduct a more comprehensive assessment of livelihood needs of IDP and host communities 	<p>1.1 PC/ER cluster¹⁹</p> <p>2.1 PC/ER</p> <p>3.1 OCHA</p> <p>4.1 PC/ER</p> <p>5.1 PCWGs</p> <p>6.1 PCWGs</p> <p>6.2 UNHCR/ partners</p>
Accountability and impunity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop skills and awareness by local actors, NGOs, local authorities in the field of protection, human rights and the concomitant obligations 2. Strengthen coordination and engagement of national authorities, both in the field and Sana'a, with the Cluster and ensure better information sharing 3. Engage in increased advocacy based on strengthened protection monitoring in the field 	<p>1.1 PC</p> <p>2.1 PC</p> <p>3.1 PC</p> <p>3.2 UNHCR Rep</p>
Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) as risks to population (those who remained and those who return)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage in awareness-raising on risks of landmines and ERWs in the areas of return 2. Coordinate with the Child Protection Sub-Cluster as well as Early Recovery Cluster to ensure that all messages and awareness are appropriately incorporated into the humanitarian response 3. Advocate for the marking and clearance of ERWs to resume and to be more comprehensive (until this can be taken on by the Early Recovery Cluster) 	<p>2.2 PC/PCWGs</p> <p>2.1. DRC/OCHA</p> <p>3.1 DRC/OCHA + ER (UNDP)</p>
Strengthening of Protection Cluster Capacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design protection training activities for Protection Cluster members; 2. Strengthen information sharing and coordination between the Protection Cluster at the Sana'a level and the field; 3. Systematize and strengthen the information sharing between the Protection Cluster and government authorities 	<p>1.1 PC+PGC</p> <p>2.1 PC+PCWGs</p> <p>3.1 PC+GoY</p>

VI. Partnerships and coordination

¹⁹ Early Recovery Cluster

The Protection Cluster serves as a participatory forum, open to all international and national organizations who, in good faith, seek to promote protection of all vulnerable and persons of concerns in Yemen.²⁰ The cluster brings together UN agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as representatives of the Government of Yemen (GoY) to, on an equal basis, exchange information on protection concerns; seek to identify solutions both immediate and through long-term advocacy and awareness raising; advocate and promote within the UN system and GoY a more systematic protection for the population of concern; seek to ensure the mainstreaming of human rights and protection tools in programming and assessments throughout the country and, finally; develop and promote strategies on protection concerns as and when necessary.

The Protection Cluster will seek to strengthen its partnership and coordination with relevant government agencies. It will also explore options for activities that will strengthen the capacity of its members to engage in the promotion and protection of relevant human rights and protection standards in Yemen. In order to achieve this, the cluster may seek support from the Geneva-based Global Protection Cluster (GPC), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and others.

The Protection Cluster members are guided in their work by the principles of **partnership** as outlined in the Global Humanitarian Platform,²¹ as well as key human rights and humanitarian principles and professional codes of conduct²². In particular:

- The principles of **humanity** and **impartiality**, in particular the requirement that all activities are carried out in a manner that espouses non-discrimination and proportionality of assistance according to identified need.
- The principles of **operational independence**, including ensuring that all activities are carried out in a transparent and balanced way and are based on objective criteria.
- The principles of **inclusiveness** and **participation** of all beneficiaries and stakeholders as active members of decision-making processes;
- The principle of **Do No Harm**, including respect for the privacy and confidentiality, which makes the safety and security of individuals and communities a paramount consideration.

a. Structure

At the national level, the Protection Cluster is chaired and coordinated by UNHCR, with support from UNICEF and Islamic Relief of Yemen (IRY). The lead organization

²⁰ The cluster also coordinates with organizations that are not formally part of it. For instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stated position on the cluster approach is the following: "Among the components of the Movement, the ICRC is not taking part in the cluster approach. Nevertheless, coordination between the ICRC and the UN will continue to the extent necessary to achieve efficient operational complementarity and a strengthened response for people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence." (IASC: *Guidance Note on using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response*, 24 November 2006)

²¹ Global Humanitarian Platform: *Principles of Partnership: A Statement of Commitment*, 12 July 2007

²² For example: *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief* (ICRC, 1994)

also acts as the “first point of call” and the “provider of last resort”²³, which includes an obligation to make every possible effort, subject to access, security and resources, to fill critical gaps in the response.²⁴

The Cluster also includes two sub-clusters:

7. **Child Protection Sub-Cluster (CP SC)**, chaired and coordinated by **UNICEF** and the **Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL)** and
8. **Sexual and Gender Based Violence Sub-Cluster (SGBV SC)**, chaired and coordinated by **UNFPA**.

In addition, the cluster has had two working groups/task forces:

- **New Approached to Humanitarian Programming**, hosted by **IOM** on the issue of conflict-sensitive programming in areas with competing tribal influences; and
- **Registration Task Force** on consolidation of IDP registration data.

In order to make its workload manageable, the cluster will continue to work through the sub-clusters and ad-hoc working groups as required and agreed by the members.

Outside Sana’a, the Cluster operates as a **Protection Working Group**. Protection Working Groups are active in Haradh and Amran where they meet twice a month; in Sa’ada where the Working Group meets once a month or as needed; and in Aden where protection issues are dealt with within a larger forum of an emergency group which meets as needed. Field-based GBV WGs and CP WGs also report to the Protection Working Groups.

Protection Cluster and associated field-based working groups meet on a bi-weekly basis. In Sana’a the meetings are held every first and third week of the month. When necessary, ad-hoc meetings may be convened to address specific issues or concerns that arise.

In order to further strengthen the coordination between the field and Sana’a as well as amongst other key actors, the Protection Cluster will continue to work to achieve the following:

- Greater and more consistent **involvement of GoY representatives** through Cluster meeting and bilateral meetings;
- Cluster will maintain **regular contacts** with its Working Groups in the field through cluster coordinators and/or by having field or Sana’a colleagues attend each other’s meetings, whilst the field-based meeting minutes will be arranged in such a way that they are provided to the Cluster Coordinator before the meeting of the Cluster if and when possible;
- Meetings and meeting minutes will be **action-oriented** by ensuring the following: (i) each meeting to identify action points and responsible agencies; (ii) each meeting to start by reviewing the progress on action

²³ [Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response](#) (IASC, Nov 2006)

²⁴ See [Generic Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster Leads at the Country Level](#) (IASC, Nov 2006) and [Operational Guidance on the Concept of ‘Provider of Last Resort’](#) (IASC, June 2008).

point from previous meetings; (iii) meeting minutes to clearly identify action points and communicate those to responsible parties, including between the working groups and the cluster; and (iv) meeting minutes to be shared amongst all cluster members (including in the field).

VII. Monitoring and evaluation

As stated already, this Strategy is intended as a living document that will be reviewed in light of new developments and evolving protection concerns. The cluster lead agency, UNHCR, is accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) for ensuring that protection issues are identified, brought to the attention of responsible institutions and adequately addressed. The ability of the Cluster to fulfill its tasks depends on the UN cluster system in Yemen and the direction and support it receives from the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Humanitarian Coordinator and lead agencies. The Protection Cluster will thus be working closely with HCT, HC and responsible agencies to uphold their role in promoting respect for human rights and humanitarian law; in advocating with the national authorities and other actors for respect for humanitarian principles, including unimpeded access to affected populations; in promoting gender mainstreaming and women's rights at the policy, planning and implementation levels; and in mobilizing resources for the humanitarian response.²⁵

The implementation of the current Strategy and its Action-Plan also depends on the situation in Yemen, which at the writing of this Strategy, seems volatile and likely to deteriorate. In order to respond to the possible deterioration and an expected emerging crisis, the Cluster has devised a contingency plan which will continue to be discussed, reviewed and adopted to the circumstances on the ground.

The Cluster will be evaluated at the end of the year against the following criteria: (i) impact; (ii) relevance; (iii) coherence; (iv) effectiveness; and (v) efficiency.

END

²⁵ See the [Revised Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator](#) (IASC, 2003) and [Guidance Note on Human Rights for Humanitarian Coordinators](#) (IASC, 2001).