



**Global Protection Cluster**

# GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2020



Child Protection AoR  
Global Protection Cluster



Gender Based Violence AoR  
Global Protection Cluster



Housing, Land and Property AoR  
Global Protection Cluster



Mine Action AoR  
Global Protection Cluster



# FOREWORD

The Protection Clusters has contributed a small and modest part to what has been a massive, concerted global effort to turn the tide of the coping crisis that was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

At the Global level, our role is to ensure that frontliners have the backing, know-how and support to save lives and deliver protection outcomes, wherever and to whoever most in need.

Our Forum this year, confirmed that protection responders are agile, responsive and will not take no for an answer in face of the limitations that the pandemic have placed on the operating environment.

We thank you all – coordinators, co-coordinators, analysts and specialised staff – for your exceptional commitment in 2020, the long working hours to the mounting technical and logistical challenges, your passion to uphold the rights and respond to needs of people we work with has been humbling.

Standing in front of your commitment, from your global team, our message at the end of 2020 and the Forum is simple: keep it up! Onwards and upwards, thank you!

**Global Protection Cluster Including Area of Responsibilities Coordinators  
Bruno Donat, Jennifer Chase, Jim Robinson,  
Michael Copland and William S. Chemaly**



# INTRODUCTION

## What is the Global Protection Cluster?

The GPC is a network of NGOs, international organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises, including those triggered by armed conflict, climate change and natural disaster. Mandated by the IASC, the GPC is led by UNHCR, with four specialized Areas of Responsibility (AoRs): Child Protection led by UNICEF; Gender-Based Violence led by UNFPA; Housing, Land and Property led by NRC; and Mine Action led by UNMAS. The GPC is governed by a multi-stakeholder Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and serviced by a multi-partner Operations Cell supported by an Information and Analysis Working Group, a Donor and Member States Liaison Platform, and thematic Task Teams. In addition, the GPC collaborates with the broader IASC system, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), various human rights treaty bodies and key development and peace actors, as well as international financial institutions and the private sector.

### OUR MISSION

Ensuring well-coordinated, effective and principled protection preparedness and responses, and that protection is at the core of all humanitarian action and recognized as essential in any nexus with development and peace.

### OUR VISION

People are protected in humanitarian crises and their rights respected and solutions found in accordance with international law.

### National Protection Clusters



### Global Protection Cluster Led by UNHCR In Support of National Protection Clusters



The GPCs main role is to support National Protection Clusters in their responsibility to coordinate an effective response. In 2020, across 26 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) where protection clusters/sectors are active, 208 million people need humanitarian assistance; of whom 113 million people require protection assistance.

The GPC and national protection clusters are delivering specialised protection services to 54 million people and are advocating for the rights of many more. By mid-December 2020, only 27% of required funding has been provided (\$525M out of \$2B) meaning 40 million people could be left without protection assistance this year.

## *What is the Global Protection Forum?*

Each year, the GPC convenes all of its partners and field coordinators to an annual forum to discuss contemporary and emerging protection challenges, review the strategic direction, and plan activities for the year to come. This annual forum is also an opportunity for field cluster coordinators to exchange knowledge and experiences across operations, and discuss capacities required to respond to emerging needs and demands. Finally, the forum is an opportunity to showcase frontline work to a wide range of partners and mobilize required resources.



# THE GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2020

In the margins of the public health and economic crises with which the world has contended through 2020, looms a long-term, far-reaching global protection crisis. People in countries with pre-existing humanitarian crises are grappling with unprecedented threats and needs with limited resources.

The Global Protection Forum 2020 was held virtually to maximise participation from our field operations and to provide the platform for critical dialogue to address emerging issues on protection. The Forum consisted of 8 technical discussions, 17 thematic strategic exchanges and a closing event:

## Technical Topics

*Closed sessions for Protection Cluster Coordinators, AoRs and IMOs in the field*

- Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021
- State of Coordination in Field Operations
- Global GBV Strategy
- Protection Operational Footprint
- Fostering Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Response
- Contributing to Collective Protection Outcomes through the Nexus
- Collective Advocacy
- Strategic Partnerships with Other Clusters

## Thematic Topics

*Open sessions for all protection partners and other sector specialists*

- Inclusion of Child & Adolescent Survivors of Sexual Violence
- Protecting Victims of Trafficking
- Human Rights Engagement
- Cash for Protection
- GBV Risk Mitigation
- Increasing Resources for and Representation of L/NGOs and CSOs
- Protection Dimension of Solutions
- Child Participation During COVID-19
- Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Older persons in the Humanitarian Response to GBV
- Leveraging Law and Policy for Effective Field Protection Response
- Coordination Between CCCM, Shelter, and Protection on Housing Land and Property rights
- Consultations on Mine Action AoR Guidance Requirements
- Risk Communication and Community Engagement
- Preventing GBV in Humanitarian Crises
- Preparedness in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change
- High Impact MHPSS
- Strengthening Protection of Civilians Efforts



## Closing Session

On the eve of the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview, the GPC concluded the Forum with a High Level Event alongside the launching of Breaking the glass ceiling: a smarter approach to protection financing.

The session hosted by Ambassador Manuel Bessler of the Swiss Government included discussion with UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner Gillian Triggs, Secretary General of NRC Jan Egeland, UN Special Rapporteur Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Nansen winner Mayerlin Vegara-Perez and Global Coordinator William Chemaly. The speakers explored key protection trends and the impact of COVID-19. Panellists were challenged on whether the humanitarian community has lived up to its policy commitments on protection. In recognition of contemporary challenges to humanitarian financing, panellists were pressed to identify what changes can be made by various stakeholders to ensure that limited resources can fund the best protection for those most at risk.

## Key Statistics



Attended by more than 3,000 humanitarian, peace and development partners; academics; UN Member States, and donors from the local, regional, and global level, the Forum reached more colleagues than ever this year, including those in remote locations. Sessions were held in English, French, Spanish, and Sign Language, allowing for greater accessibility.

The concluding High Level Event and report galvanized international attention on protection at a critical moment, with the supporting press release picked up widely by media, with a total estimated readership of over 100 million (note that this figure refers to estimated combined readership of the outlets in which the presser was headlined, not of the article itself, as this data unavailable).



# TOP 10 TAKEAWAYS

## 1. Stayed and delivered

During COVID-19, in some of the toughest places to operate, protection actors not only stayed and delivered across all 26 operations, we also developed a GPC Operational Footprint and support package to scale response for COVID-19, for the benefit of the 19 additional countries included in GHRP. Over a wide range of discussions in these dynamic sessions, one message was clear: protection work continued despite the challenges.

## 2. Protection saves lives

In times of crisis, the protection response has proven itself to be agile and lifesaving. Protection actors stayed and delivered throughout the pandemic, where deadly protection risks created by conflict and violence saw a global spike. However, advocacy to prevent, mitigate and respond to protection risks and rights violations must be strengthened to ensure rights are respected in accordance with international law. The pandemic has proven that in order to save lives, it is critical that resources are mobilised rapidly to empower those on the frontline of the response.

- The GPC commits to ensuring mobilisation of resources to frontline actors is at the heart of advocacy objectives and with specific targets per country

## 3. Basics should be in place

2020 has demonstrated that to protect the most vulnerable when crises hit, the basics have to be in place. Gaps in coordination, programming and monitoring within field protection responses remain in several operations and hinder the effectiveness of the entire response. It is therefore essential that a fully costed minimum protection package is developed to mobilise essential resources for operations.

- The GPC commits to developing a minimum protection package with costing methods to be used as a benchmark in all operations and diversify the sources that finance it.

## 4. Local actors are the driving force of protection

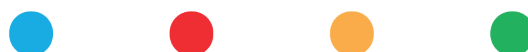
The lockdowns that have isolated us from the communities we work with have forced us to confront the indisputable facts: The frontline is forged by national and local societies, women-led organisations, youth clubs, faith leaders and organisers, neighbours, schools, community groups and individuals, often made first responders by necessity, often best equipped to protect.

- The GPC will institutionalise in field protection clusters, where possible, that 25 percent of all protection funding within humanitarian response plans be directed to local actors.

## 5. Tackling discrimination requires an inclusive response from outset

In order to achieve protection outcomes for some of the most marginalised within society and tackle dangerous xenophobia and stigma that proliferates across communities in times of crisis needs leadership from the front. This requires meaningful, equal, and non-discriminatory participation of affected people at all stages of the response from equal access to protection assistance and solutions to formal and informal feedback mechanisms.

- The GPC will develop systematic ways to ensure stronger predictable response to the needs of people living with a disability, elderly people and youth.







## *6. Stronger investment in protection analysis is critical and long overdue*

To ensure evidence-based coordination, programming and advocacy for quality protection outcomes, there must be a strong investment in data collection and analysis. This information needs to be verified across the humanitarian community and shared regularly with human rights, development, peace, security and other protection stakeholders to support strategic decision-making.

- The GPC will ensure resources and analytical capacities are in place in all operations, including by developing a common analytical framework, supporting the enhancement and roll-out of comprehensive protection risks, needs and response monitoring systems and systematise the regular sharing information through briefs and reports.

## *7. Multidisciplinary action critical to achieving SDGs*

Protection Clusters should catalyse a wholistic protection response. This requires ensuring protection is integrated across the humanitarian, development and peace continuum and brings together actors required to do so – national and local governments, local actors, displaced persons, host community, businesses, academia, diasporas, faith-based organizations and private sector, etc.

- The GPC will support field protection clusters to engage in dialogue with a range of actors and ensure that Humanitarian Country Team protection strategies and/or protection cluster strategies are a reference point to enable protection inclusion in bridging the nexus.

## *8. Prepare to protect*

While responding to the immediate protection needs of affected populations has been at the forefront of the protection agenda, COVID-19 has highlighted that investing in preparedness is just as critical. Lack of preparation costs lives.

- The GPC will support field clusters in key operations to develop preparedness and contingency plans and foster protection across all phases of crisis.



## *9. Translate rhetoric into reality when it comes to mental health*

Addressing the mental health and psychosocial consequences of conflict, violence and disasters contributes to protection by strengthening the agency of people to effectively address their own needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown there is still work to be done to ensure that Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is treated as a joint responsibility that is part of all sectors.

- The GPC commits to strengthen its engagement of all protection actors and other humanitarian sectors on MHPSS to make MHPSS more effective and the protection response more comprehensive and equitable.

## *10. Braver, stronger, collective advocacy is essential to protecting those most at risk*

Advocating on protection in the COVID-19 era demands that humanitarian protection actors be more creative and daring in their advocacy tactics. This includes challenging established practice, understanding that there is no 'one fits for all' approach and no guarantee of success, and appreciating that the risks inherent in taking a new approach must be balanced with the risks to civilians of not taking any action.

- The GPC commits to developing collective advocacy approaches at national and global level that harness the comparative advantage of its cluster members and puts the voice of affected communities at the forefront



# LOOKING AHEAD

The protection response is multifaceted, expansive and complex. During the Global Forum and the concluding High-Level the GPC heard from a range of partners, including the donor community, a strong commitment to work together to achieve a more protective response for affected populations.

- The United States offered working with the GPC on hosting a “temperature check” / mid-year review event next year that will take stock of protection resources and provide a focus on urgent needs for the remainder of the year. The US committed to a reinforced focus on GBV.
- Switzerland committed to increase their funding to protection along with deploying/seconding more staff to the field.
- Sweden offered to facilitate in the Good Humanitarian Donorship group translating Centrality of Protection to operational benchmarks for donors.
- The Netherlands will support the GPC to advance the response on MHPSS.
- Australia outlined commitments to improving localisation of the protection response.
- Norway will work with the GPC to use their new role on the Security Council to push for a more principled response for people affected by conflict and Protection of Civilians.
- The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, committed to take the findings of the report and the Global Forum discussions the event to the IASC Principals for further action in 2021.

The coping crisis will get worse next year, and in the years to come as we deal with the consequences of the economic fall-out of the pandemic. We must now be smarter in how we prioritise, deliver, report against every cent to make sure that it is protective. We cannot afford for years-worth of progress in advancing rights, and safeguarding futures to be reversed because we did not invest.

The Global Protection Cluster will continue to drive these commitments forward to ensure the delivery of better protection outcomes across all sectors of the humanitarian response.

