

EMERGENCY DONOR MEETING

24 August 2021

KEY MESSAGES

1- The crisis in Afghanistan is first and foremost a humanitarian crisis with urgent needs to be met.

According to the 2021 HRP, 12,8 million people are in need of protection. In the first six months of the year, protection actors continued to deliver life-saving assistance to affected communities, reaching a total of 1,59 million people.

Humanitarian needs will increase as new displacement patterns (558K IDPs) exacerbate existing vulnerabilities linked to the conflict, the effects of the drought and the COVID-19 pandemic.

2- Humanitarians and protection partners are staying and delivering in Afghanistan despite the challenges.

The majority of protection partners temporarily halted activities over the past two weeks. However, humanitarian actors remain committed to stay and deliver as soon as possible.

The Protection Cluster is mapping its current presence and capacity on a daily basis, continuing to update 3W information from coordination hubs on presence, operational capacity, activities on-going/resumed/on hold, challenges/progress in negotiations on humanitarian space.

Many operations and activities are on-going or have resumed in some areas, adjustment is happening in other areas, particularly in locations newly under Taliban control.

The Taliban appointed NGO Commissioner focal points in every province and organized introductory meetings with UN/NGOs. They have expressed interest to take part in inter-agency Joint Assessment Teams (JATs) and aid distributions. NGOs are requested to get the NGO Commission approval for any ongoing and future activities.

Protection partners report that ongoing activities include: Border Monitoring; Person with Specific Needs (PSN) identification and assistance; Case management; Protection Monitoring; Psychosocial support (PSS).

Activities that are stopped include: Multi-purpose and targeted Cash Assistance; Individual Protection Assistance (Cash); Focus Group Discussions and in person Household surveys.

The Protection Cluster is working to ensure the safety and security of staff and of affected communities. Duty of care is paramount. The GBV Sub-Cluster has created and shared with partners data protection guidelines for handling sensitive data in case of suspension of programs/evacuation.

3- Diplomacy efforts are needed to ensure urgent unimpeded access and impartial assistance to affected communities.

Advocacy to ensure Taliban allow and facilitate the impartial provision of assistance; including through full and unimpeded access to enable humanitarians reach populations affected and safe passages for civilians who are planning to leave Afghanistan or for IDPs to return to their areas of origin.

Protection should be prioritized as physical presence of protection partners and community-based protection approaches are paramount. Protection issues cannot be addressed by items delivery only.

Possibility to work for female humanitarian workers should be guaranteed.

Space and safety to stay and deliver aid must be protected especially for local actors with capacities, knowledge, and access to affected areas.

4- Humanitarian resources were already falling dramatically short. It is not the time to held or withdraw resources.

The Protection Cluster's financial appeal for Afghanistan remains acutely underfunded, at only 37% of a total US\$ 114,5 million required.

Funding (particularly Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund) should not be held or withdrawn under current situation and donors should allow flexibility and longer implementation timeframe to partners in operations; ensuring delays will not result in bad performance reviews. This would ensure operational continuity and allow timely and effective humanitarian interventions.

Priority areas for funding are psychosocial support, case management, family tracing and reunification, response to survivors of sexual violence and victims of grave violations, explosive ordnance clearance and risk education, women's land rights.

5- The GPC established a global Emergency Support Cell to ensure quality programming and principled humanitarian action.

The Cell is in full coordination with the team in country and the agencies with specific Areas of Responsibility.

The Cell is for all protection partners in Afghanistan to advice of projects and services adaptation, new programmes and advocacy.

This is hands on support to reduce the pressure on the team on the ground and ensure quality programming and principled humanitarian action.