

GCCG meeting
5 December 2023, 15:00 to 17:00 Geneva time

Participant/Global Cluster: Linda Doull and Emma Fitzpatrick (GHC); Michelle Brown and Friedrich Affolter (GEC); Brett Moore and Pablo Medina (GSC); Nisar Syed (UNICEF-led Global Clusters Rep); Astrid Haaland (GBV AoR); Samuel Cheung and Peter Kozelets (GPC); Stefano Fedele and Briony Stevens (GNC); Abdul Majid and Marie-Helene Kyprianou (GFSC); Brent Carbo (GETC); Monica Ramos and Julie Bara (GWC); Mary Jelliti (GLC); Jim Robinson (HLP AoR); Yoshiyuki Shiomi (MA AoR); Joyce Mutiso (CP AoR); Mary Pack (GCCG Co-Chair); Randa Hassan, Annarita Marcantonio, Mari Sawai and Fabia Hasch (GCCG-s).

Invitees: Kimberly Lietz (OCHA OPT); Anthony Neal (INGO Forum Sudan) and Justin Brady (OCHA Sudan).

Summary and action points

Welcome and agenda overview

1. Ms. Mary Pack, GCCG Co-Chair, welcomed participants and provided a brief overview of the agenda. The order of the agenda items was shifted to accommodate for presenters' availability. No other changes to the proposed agenda were made, and the agenda was adopted.

Updates and follow-up on GCCG action points

2. Ms. Pack provided an update on recent IASC meetings and pending action points from previous GCCG meetings.
 - The IASC Task Force 1 on Centrality of Protection met on 8 November.
 - The IASC Task Force 5 on Localization met on 14 November.
 - The IASC Task Force 3 on Preserving Humanitarian Space met on 29 November.
 - The IASC Task Force 4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its Linkages to Peace Advances met on 28 November. GWC enquired whether the Advisory Note on *Advancing the HDP Nexus Approach through IASC Global Clusters* was sent out. GHC clarified that a final draft had been disseminated.
 - The HPC Steering Group met on 30 November. Two items were on the agenda: the 2024 GHO, and monitoring. A draft statement on data disaggregation was circulated for comments. Regarding the request made for a briefing by OCHA on the experiences from HPC lightening and boundary setting, Ms. Pack proposed to include this in the meeting in February. Mr. Syed (UNICEF-led Global Clusters Rep) expressed concerns around capping and exclusion of certain issues, e.g. cholera being excluded from several HRPs including in Mozambique. GHC proposed to GCCs to collate examples of inclusion and exclusion to present during the discussion, which was agreed by Ms. Pack. GEC asked to include in the discussion feedback on the HPC process itself, including on merged HNRPs.
 - On the Monitoring Working Group (MWG), Mr. Affolter (GEC) reported that a draft statement on population data disaggregation had been presented at the last meeting. A model for monitoring at the outcome level against strategic objectives was further discussed. He suggested inviting the Chair of the MWG, Mr. David Goetghebuer, to brief the GCCG.
 - A hybrid joint IASC OPAG/EDG meeting on the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHE) in northern Ethiopia and Afghanistan will take place on 24 January. Ms. Pack asked interested GCCs to confirm their participation and noted that GWC (Ms. Ramos) had so far expressed interest.
3. Regarding pending action points, Ms. Pack noted that a GCCG session at the HNPW is scheduled for the afternoon of 7 May 2024. GSC confirmed that the paper on CBPF/CERF was finalized and would be circulated, and that it was an overview of challenges faced by clusters during the allocation and disbursement of CBPF and CERF funding. He asked GCCs to provide any red-line comments or objections on the opening paragraph. The paper would then be shared with the relevant colleagues in the CERF and CBPF secretariat.

Action points

- i. GCCs: send comments on the draft statement on data disaggregation, if any, to be shared with the HPC SG.
- ii. GCCs: collate examples of inclusion and exclusion in the 2024 HRPs from the respective clusters for the purposes of a discussion on this topic at a forthcoming GCCG meeting.
- iii. GCCs: provide red-line comments or objections on the opening paragraph of the GSC paper on CBPF and CERF to Mr. Brett Moore, GSC.

Update on the ICCG training module

4. Ms. Pack invited Ms. Fitzpatrick (GHC) and Ms. Stevens (GNC) to update on the ICCG training module. The training module aims to strengthen inter-cluster coordination at the country level. The one-hour e-learning (shared with the GCCs for feedback) will be complemented by face-to-face training. The face-to-face module is estimated to last around three hours and will be finalized in December-January. The e-learning will be tested in several countries in December, before being published on the OCHA Learn platform and a wider pilot and dissemination is expected between January and March. GCCs were asked to support with French translation of the e-learning module.
5. The floor was opened for questions and comments. Ms. Pack enquired about the date of final endorsement for the e-learning module and encouraged GCCs to support with translation. It was confirmed that the final endorsement was due at the end of this week and clusters had already sent comments. CP AoR offered support to the pilot in Nigeria.

Action points

- iv. *GCCs to offer support with French translation of the ICCG e-learning module.*

Coordination in Sudan

6. Ms. Pack invited Mr. Anthony Neal (INGO Forum Sudan) and Mr. Justin Brady (Head of Office, OCHA Sudan) to brief the GCCG on coordination issues in Sudan. Mr. Neal noted that the Peer-2-Peer report on Sudan, following its mission in February 2023, highlighted that many of the coordination-related challenges were systemic and predated the current crisis, now exacerbated by the situation. Amongst its recommendations was a global cluster mission to perform a review of key clusters, as identified by the HCT, and provide capacity strengthening, which has yet to take place. He called for alternative modalities to look at cluster capacity strengthening if in-person deployment was not feasible. On co-leadership of clusters, Mr. Neal highlighted that several clusters still lacked co-coordinators. At the subnational level, there was a significant gap in operational coordination by clusters. Remote coordination modalities were not working due to connectivity challenges. Mr. Neal expressed concern that options of having INGOs and local NGOs, present on the ground and able to take on a more active role in coordination in support, had not been explored.
7. Other gaps perceived by INGOs include: (1) lack of advocacy by the clusters at global and national level to raise the profile of Sudan; (2) clusters' engagement with the Access Working Group to proactively identify and resolve operational challenges related to access; (3) insufficient technical capacity to guide the response in various sectors or maladapted strategies to the context. Mr. Neal provided the example of a "state-centric" approach in prioritizing formal over non-formal education resulting in IDPs leaving schools where they were housed; (4) insufficient gap analysis. Mr. Neal further emphasized that clusters needed to provide strategic leadership on protection mainstreaming and engagement with local actors. He asked clusters to look, with their leadership, at ways to fill existing co-chair gaps particularly at the sub-national level; and to conduct greater advocacy to address the challenges being faced by humanitarian actors. In closing, he noted that the long-standing trust issues between the UN and NGOs could be addressed through greater cluster leadership to solve operational challenges through consultations with their cluster partners.
8. Mr. Brady noted that the Operational Peer Review was likely to take place in March, and that an operational and coordination review is currently taking place. He noted that the three key challenges are access, funding and a need for greater attention to the Sudan crisis at the global level. Currently, the operation reaches five million out of 24 million people in need and is 40% funded. Concerning cluster co-chairs, Mr. Brady noted that there are no co-chairs for Health, Nutrition, Food Security, WASH, GBV, Mine Action, and Logistics. Cluster coordinators have been asked to be present at least one week a month for in-person coordination meetings.
9. The floor was opened for comments and questions. The Global CP AoR highlighted that it was supporting the Sudan CP AoR on localization with a workshop on 6 and 7 December to understand the current situation on localization and develop and implement an action plan. CP AoR noted that they will include co-coordination in the workshop. GNC said that co-leadership was not the only or best approach to include NGOs in cluster coordination and suggested having NGOs as deputy cluster coordinators. He welcomed further conversation to address coordination gaps for the nutrition cluster at the sub-national level. GWC noted the difference between co-lead and co-chair (or co-coordinator) with the formal IASC designation for co-leads to ensure clear accountability. Further, if there were NGOs interested in co-chairing, these discussions would be important to

have at the level of the HCT. Mr. Neal confirmed that NGOs are willing to co-coordinate and that an HCT decision on co-ordination was made in 2021 and reaffirmed in 2023, but not implemented. GLC noted that agencies are facing challenges receiving visas and due to the cap on personnel, GLC has deployed personnel to Port Sudan.

10. Mr. Syed (UNICEF-led Global Clusters Rep) noted that the UNICEF-led clusters will continue to support capacity building and strengthening of its clusters. UNICEF has allocated its funding to ensure coordinators are in place, and recently recruited roving coordinators at the subnational level. He highlighted the serious challenges in securing funding for coordinators. Mr. Brady confirmed that the approach of having an NGO co-chair was affirmed multiple times, most recently in the Peer-2-Peer report. On visas, he acknowledged that currently there was a challenge related to having a cap on the number of personnel despite having visas but expected this to be resolved soon. There was also an issue with space, however he reiterated that coordination should be a priority. GHC invited the INGO Forum to write a letter to WHO to ensure a coordinator is in place to support advocacy that the GHC has been undertaking on this point with WHO at headquarters level. GHC asked for a list of donors supporting coordination, to which Mr. Neal responded that it included BHA and ECHO.
11. On NGO co-ordination, Mr. Neal clarified that while INGOs were not asking to be a provider of last resort, there were several NGOs willing to step in as co-coordinators and the decisions taken at the HCT were not followed through – which erodes trust of the NGOs in the cluster system. He urged GCCs to think about the implications of leaving gaps on the ground due to not having an NGO co-chair. Mr. Neal estimated that agencies will need six to 12 months to be physically present in Darfur or Kordofan and therefore reiterated the need for a delegated model. He said that the overlap between UN priorities and cluster priorities deprioritize the priorities of other partners such as NGOs, and having INGOs participate in the leadership of the cluster is one way to address this issue. Ms. Hassan enquired whether the GCCG could support capacity building through remote workshops. Mr. Neal agreed that workshops would be helpful on principles of partnership, intercluster coordination, multisectoral response, remote management of operations, and localization.

Action points

- v. *GCCs and GCCG-s to consider a remote workshop to strengthen coordination in Sudan. Possible areas are principles of partnership, intercluster coordination, multisectoral response, remote management and localization.*

Operational Updates

12. **Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT):** Ms. Hassan invited Ms. Lietz to brief on operational updates from OPT. Ms. Lietz reminded that a Joint Humanitarian Operations Center (JHOC) was established in Gaza about 2.5 weeks ago, and the coordination structure is envisioned to conform with the IASC cluster system. Although the security management team decided to reduce the number of international staff in Gaza from 42 to 20, OCHA is asking CLAs to mobilize coordination support with an expectation that the number can increase by next week. Ms. Gemma Connel will replace Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa for OCHA in Gaza in the coming month. The vision is to have a streamlined humanitarian presence with strong cluster coordination capacity and a strong but lean OCHA in Gaza. Communication challenges between East Jerusalem and Gaza persist and blackouts continue to pose major challenges. The Flash Appeal (US\$1.2 billion) has been extended into the first three months of 2024 based on a no-cost extension. OCHA OPT will issue an explanatory note to be used for further advocacy. The Appeal is the largest three-month Flash Appeal ever issued and is currently 32% funded. Ms. Lietz asked GCCs to contact her if advocacy is needed on filling cluster coordination gaps.
13. The floor was opened for comments and questions. GNC enquired whether staffing number includes all international staff from UN agencies including UNRWA. Ms. Lietz clarified that the number (20) includes all UN agencies, including clusters and UNRWA which remains heavily reliant on national staff. The decision was taken due to the increasing number of IDPs congregating in Rafah which resulted in security risks and inhibited the ability to deliver aid. GSC emphasized the need to prioritize operational staff over coordination staff given the current circumstances and asked for an update on the situation in the occupied West Bank. Ms. Lietz responded that the repositioning of supplies was ongoing and in a good state, particularly for health supplies. The West Bank Emergency Operation Cell is preparing different scenarios to explore options for ensuring continuity of response.
14. GLC asked for an update on the prioritization table and whether UNRWA and PRCS were included. Ms. Lietz explained that the prioritization was being completed by cluster coordinators in consultation with partners on a rolling basis, and shared the Power BI link in the chat ([LINK](#)). It includes UNRWA who is part of the national ICCG. The prioritization is done for one or two months and is based on the identified needs and the aid

delivered and anticipated to be delivered. The prioritization for the second month is used by donors to inform the pipeline and is linked to the Flash Appeal. Based on this information, OCHA OPT issues a one-week prioritization list every week, primarily for advocacy purposes. Ms. Lietz cautioned, however, that this was an estimate as information on supplies and services entering Gaza was incomplete. PRCS and the UN do not validate each other's lists, but they complement each other. GLC added that the WFP Executive Director was meeting with the USG later that week. GLC asked for further details on the timeline of evacuation of international staff out of Gaza, to which Ms. Lietz responded that it was three days. GEC asked for background on why it appeared that the Education Cluster was being deprioritized, to which Ms. Lietz responded that there were certain factors impacting what supplies were sent in and that food, water, and medicine were currently at the top of the list. On the deployment of stand-by partners deployment, Ms. Lietz said she would revert with more information.

15. **The Pacific:** Ms. Hassan conducted a mission from 21 to 29 November to support a workshop of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT). The one-day workshop was the first step in an ongoing review process and highlighted several areas requiring the PHT's engagement. Almost every cluster is activated in the Pacific on an open-ended basis, mainly for preparedness but for response purposes. The PHT includes heads of agencies, an ICCG and clusters, as well as an expanded partnership group composed of governments from the region, donors and other actors implicated in responding to emergencies. Seven overarching areas of concern were highlighted as part of the review: (a) Clarity needed on roles, responsibilities, structure, governance, (b) Strengthened ICC, (c) UN-centricity (d) the need to localize and operationalize, (e) protection and cross-cutting issues, (f) connecting with development and disaster risk reduction. Generally speaking, there was a lack of clarity on what cluster activation in the Pacific entailed, including by cluster coordinators and humanitarian leadership. A key concern that emerged was whether the cluster architecture was adapted to the Pacific context, with many feeling that it was not. Ms. Hassan also highlighted the politicization of the context and the need for humanitarian actors to be more proactive in forging relationships with a broader range of interlocutors. This was highlighted in the PHT retreat, including the need to do a stakeholder mapping. A meeting with the ICCG took place on 4 December, and as part of the emphasis to strengthen its operationality, the group agreed to have a joint approach towards the NDMOs, including joint cluster and OCHA missions to the countries in the region. OCHA will ask the NDMOs to identify their support needs and share them with clusters. A PHT principals meeting to identify the next steps will be held on 8 December.

Action points

- vi. *GCCG-s: revert with information on the deployment of stand-by partners in Gaza from Ms. Lietz.*

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16. GCCs were reminded to express interest in leading sessions during the GCCG retreat on 8 to 9 February. Preparing the GCCG key messages to EDGs at the GCCG retreat will be discussed at the next GCCG meeting in January.
17. An ad-hoc meeting on Multi-Purpose Cash with the Co-Chairs of the Global Cash Advisory Group (CAG) is planned for 31 January. Ms. Pack asked GCCs to indicate possible conflicts in the chat. A CAG consultant will approach GCCs in the coming weeks to discuss MPC.
18. Ms. Pack reminded that the next regular GCCG meeting will be on 16 January, 14:00 – 16:00 Geneva time. Proposed agenda items include: (1) Operational updates, (2) Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluations in northern Ethiopia and Afghanistan, and (3) Preparations for the GCCG retreat.

Action points

- vii. *GCCs: express interest in leading sessions at the GCCG retreat.*