



## IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action

### IASC GENDER RG-MONTHLY MEETING, 11 June 2014

#### Meeting Chair

Elizabeth Cafferty, WRC

#### Participants

Ayoo Odicoh, CAR GenCap/OCHA (for part)

Linda Rougvie, GBV Sub-Cluster African Union Mission, CAR (for part)

Bethany Brown, HelpAge

Marcus Skinner, HelpAge

Katie XX, Mercy Corps, CAR (for part)

Njoki Rahab, OCHA (for part)

Katie Tong, Plan International

Zara Rapoport, Plan International

Kariane Peek Cabrera, UNICEF

Sibi Lawson Marriott, UNICEF (for part)

Siobhán Foran, IFRC

Henia Dakkak, UNFPA

Luisa Cremonese, UNHCR

Sara Gottfredsen, UNHCR

Jahal de Meritens, UNDP

Stephen Robinson, GenCap/UNDP

Delphine Brun, GenCap/UNICEF

David Coffey, UN Women

Allison Varricchio, UN Women

#### Approval of the minutes of May 7 meeting

The minutes of the May 7 meeting were approved.

#### Update on South Sudan and Central African Republic (CAR)

Regarding the situation in South Sudan, WRC provided an update - based on an email bulletin from GenCap in-country - on the status of the complex emergency in South Sudan. It was announced that the Gender Alert on South Sudan was well received at the Norway donor pledging meeting and elsewhere. WRC also worked closely with the GenCap on her talking points at the May Security Council Arria on displaced persons, making specific recommendations to the Council regarding the situation of displaced person in South Sudan.

The GenCap Advisor and Mercy Corps' gender expert updated the GRG on the current humanitarian situation in Central African Republic (CAR):

- Under-financing is limiting the capacity for humanitarian action.
- There is a complete breakdown of state security.
- There are currently no safe shelters available in the country.
- Most GBV focal points have rotated out of the country.
- GBV, shelter, and food remain pressing humanitarian action priorities.

The "GenCap Gender Briefing Note on Central African Republic" (June 2014) was circulated to the GRG during the meeting. The briefing note highlights the situation of

women, girls and gender equality in CAR. Please see the briefing note and June Gender Alert for further analysis of these issues from a gender lens.

**Action point:**

- GRG to produce a Gender Alert on CAR based on CAR GenCap Advisor’s briefing notes and input from other GRG members.

**Summary document of the 2008 Gender Equality Policy Statement**

UNHCR spoke to the summary document that it had been drafting, as per the GRG Annual Meeting in January, *“IASC Gender Reference Group: Update to the 2008 Gender Policy Statement.”* The document emphasizes the importance of pursuing gender analysis with an age and diversity dimension. As per the minutes of the face to face meeting, the purpose of the update is to make the 2008 Gender Policy Statement clearer, and to develop a people-centered, human rights-based approach to gender analysis. It has also been discussed as hopefully being of use as a tool that, because of its brevity, would be easily digestible and more likely to be read and referred to by non-gender experts.

**Action point:**

- Final comments from members to the document to be shared with co-chairs and co-chairs will finalize and circulate final version.

**Update on of Cross-Cutting Questionnaire Response**

IFRC briefed on the synthesis of the XCI questionnaire responses received from HelpAge, IFRC, WFP, Plan, and UNICEF.

Broadly, the five respondents welcomed the report as a first step in reinvigorating the debate on people-centred approach to humanitarian action and also agreed that a meeting of XCIs to discuss and agree a way forward and then a ‘roundtable’ discussion with OCHA HCSS and the GCCG is now required.

Some key issues that emerged from the responses to the questionnaire included;

- No consensus on the report’s recommendation for the creation of a coordination platform for XCIs representatives at the global level as a best way forward to enhance coordination and representation at an inter-agency level (two respondents agreed, two disagreed and one preferred a convening rather than a coordination platform).
- In terms of who should be represented in any agreed global-level platform or forum, four of the five respondents agreed that people-centred XCIs should be brought together and that reversion to a wider list of XCIs that includes early recovery, DRR, environment, etc. would undermine people-centred XCIs’ coordination and cohesion.
- No agreement on what agency or group should play the role of facilitator/secretariat for a coordination/convening group; two respondents suggest that the issue requires further discussion, one suggested OCHA HCSS and another the AAP/PSEA TT or OCHA.
- The review suggests that, at the global-level, the AAP/PSEA TT be the coordination and promotion body for “diversity concerns” and members were asked whether such an arrangement would be preferable to the creation of a XCIs’ platform. Three answered yes (preferable), one answered no and one was undecided.

- On coordination and representation of XCI at the field-level, the report recommends the adoption of an ‘accountability support function’ to advise the HC, HCT and Cluster Leads on diversity and accountability issues at the strategic-level (while technical advisers on gender, age, disability, MHPSS, AAP and HIV would provide operational advice at the cluster and organisational level). Four respondents answered yes, one with reservations and one respondent remained undecided at this stage.
- In terms of where this ‘support function’ should be housed, four of the five respondents said that this would preferably in the office of the RC/HC.
- On the question of whether setting minimum standards as a “benchmarking tool” to assess the performance of duty bearers would be the best way forward to monitor the integration of XCI in country programmes, four of the five respondents agreed that some form of accountability framework linked to a precise and measureable action plan is needed but that further discussion on the issue is required.

**Action points:**

- GRG members to send in any further comments, questions or feedback associated with the XCI Questionnaire Response to GRG Co-chair of IFRC.
- The synthesis will be shared with other XCI and with HCSS and will form the basis for discussions on how to move ahead towards people-centred humanitarian action.

**Discussion on relationship between IASC GRG and Global Clusters Coordination Group (GCCG)**

IFRC provided some background to the history of gender within the Global Clusters Coordination Group (GCCG) dating back to 2006. From 2009 until February this year, gender and the interests of the GRG have been represented and championed by GenCap Advisers with the Global Clusters. Between 2010 – 2012, initially brought together for the revision of the Sphere Handbook, an informal group of XCI’s focal points, including GenCap, has met sporadically to try to advance and to strengthen the integration of XCI in the clusters’ work.

OCHA HCSS, as convenor of the GCCG, has recently reached out to a number of agencies and organisations, including GenCap, inviting them to a one-day workshop on developing practical recommendations/actions to better integrate cross-cutting issues in the strategic planning processes. The actions developed will be used in upcoming HPC trainings and field-orientated support in the 2015 strategic planning processes.

The GRG members discussed currently conversations with GCCG members regarding GCCG methods of working, discussion of cross-cutting issues, and specifically through what mechanisms GCCG and GRG were communicating. Some members wished to create a direct mechanism for communication between the two groups. Others felt that the GCCG believes that the Global GenCap already provides the GCCG with the gender perspective it needs.

WRC suggested that co-chairs have further discussions after the meeting to discuss any next steps and communications with the GRG.

**Action Point:**

- GRG co-chairs to discuss next steps, including, possibly, a more direct means of communication, between the two groups.

#### **GRG Co-Chair Nomination**

The GRG Co-Chair position will be filled by WFP, with their representative, Patricia Colbert, Gender Coordinator. WFP is replacing UNHCR as the European-based UN Agency co-chair. No concerns were expressed by the present GRG members and the nomination was approved.

The GRG thanked Luisa from UNHCR for her commitment and dedication to the group. Her knowledge, expertise and assistance to the GRG have been greatly appreciated.

#### **Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) Strategy Launch Event Proposal**

WRC requested the support of the GRG in co-hosting a launch of UNHCR's SAFE Strategy in New York to serve as a follow up to the Geneva launch. The SAFE Strategy aims to make access to fuel and firewood a humanitarian action priority. WRC noted that most member agencies of the GRG are also partners in this work. The proposed event would consist of a panel discussion at UN HQ. The request was seconded by UNHCR and UN Women.

#### **Additional Reminders**

- **20 June:** IASC Gender Marker Presentation commissioned by the GenCap Steering Committee. Logistical information will be provided soon.
- **25 June:** ECOSOC Side-Event on the Gender Equality Programme Research Study.
  - Time-1:15pm to 2:30pm
  - Location - UN HQ North Lawn Building, Conference Room 5