

**ROLL-OUT OF THE IASC PROTECTION POLICY**

Update as of 20 March 2017

1. The IASC adopted the draft of a Protection Policy delivered by the Global Protection Cluster on 5 October 2016. In its meeting of 25-26 October 2016, the IASC Working Group decided against the formation of a task team to help roll out the Policy and asked the GPC to undertake the coordination of the roll-out, based on the attached implementation plan. In the very short time between the transmission of that decision to the GPC and this update much has been done but, as the attached plan makes clear, work on dissemination had already started before the adoption of the Policy.

Progress

1. At the same time as the adoption of the Policy the GPC issued provisional guidance to Humanitarian Country Teams on the development of protection strategies to help them mobilise a comprehensive, system-wide and multi-sector effort to prevent or respond to the most serious protection risks[[1]](#footnote-1).
2. In December 2016, the GPC convened a meeting of STAIT, OCHA, OHCHR, the EDG Secretariat and the IASC Secretariat to refine the implementation plan and set immediate taskings. The refinement enhances the roll-out from implementation of the Policy *per se* to using the Policy to advance the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, i.e. the purpose behind the adoption of the Policy. The taskings which have been completed or on-going are marked in the attached implementation plan and it can be seen that a strong start has been made, with more work planned throughout the year.
3. In order to ensure momentum, the GPC has asked OCHA to convene a small working group to provide information about actions taken from partners in the GPC, inputs for ideas about the roll-out and to measure progress. The GPC Coordinator will continue to convene meetings of the STAIT, OCHA, OHCHR, EDG and IASC Secretariats to gather similar information and inputs. The expected trajectory of the roll-out is that it will continue the pattern observed with the 2013 Centrality of Protection Statement, where humanitarian leaders were introduced to the concept and then encountered practical questions of implementation, requiring further guidance and support.

Impact

1. The emphasis on protection as the outcome of humanitarian action, including through the 2013 Centrality of Protection Statement, has been characterized as a game-changer in humanitarian response[[2]](#footnote-2). In February 2017, the GPC issued a review of actions taken to promote the centrality of protection as a first attempt to measure progress and gathering good practice[[3]](#footnote-3). It is too early to say what qualitative difference the Policy has made but we can see in the Humanitarian Response Plans 2017 a general emphasis on protection priorities and the inclusion of protection as strategic objectives. In terms of broader progress in taking forward the commitments set out in the policy, we would highlight that the STAIT has draft HCT terms of reference that underline the necessity of a collective approach around centrality of protection: a growing number of countries have developed (CAR, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen) or are in the process of developing HCT protection strategies (Ukraine, Myanmar, DRC, Somalia, Colombia). It is also worth noting that EDG missions to Nigeria and the Central African Republic in November/December 2016 included a thematic focus on protection, GBV and PSEA, and on enhanced headquarters support to field leadership in this regard. Generally, there have been a number of STAIT, GPC, and ProCap missions to support humanitarian leadership on protection and efforts to ensure protection informs humanitarian response. The GPC has asked OCHA to form a Task Team to produce a second review of actions during 2017 to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action, to be published in early 2018.

Challenges

1. The challenges to the roll-out of the Policy are no different to the quotidian difficulties of ensuring compliance with any policy or practice in a vast and complex eco-system where collaboration is by choice rather than a requirement. That being said, the introduction of the Policy at a time of evolution of the eco-system following the World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain presents its own unique problems, notably in ensuring attention to this important milestone in the work of the IASC. To that end, the GPC promotes:
   1. the adoption of the centrality of protection as the organizing principle around which the IASC develops strategy, plans and disposes of funds; by implication, the IASC Protection Policy becomes a “core document” or constitution of the eco-system;
   2. all Humanitarian Country Teams to have a protection and solutions strategy;
   3. an improvement in inter-cluster coordination for protection outcomes and to support HCTs in implementing a protection and solutions strategy.

1. (at <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/news_and_publications/hct-protection-strategies-provisional-guidance-final-september-2016.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. (<http://www.planningfromthefuture.org/uploads/4/5/6/0/45605399/pff_report_uk.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. (at <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/news_and_publications/gpc-cop_review_2016.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)