Global Cluster Coordination Group (GCCG) meeting – 10 March 2021
Summary of discussion and action points

Participants: Ms. Monica Ramos, Global WASH Cluster (GWC); Ms. Linda Doull, Global Health Cluster (GHC); Ms. Ela Serdaroglu and Mr. Brett Moore, Global Shelter Cluster (GSC); Ms. Anna Ziolkovska, Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC); Mr. Dher Hayo and Mr. Brian McDonald, Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM); Sofia Khetib, Global Protection Cluster (GPC); Ms. Naouar Labidi, Global Food Security Cluster (GFSC); Ms. Athalie Mayo, Global Logistics Cluster (GLC); Ms. Jennifer Chase, Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR); Ms. Christelle Loupforest, Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR); Ms. Maria Agnese Giordano and Ms. Michelle Brown, Global Education Cluster (GEC); Mr. Brent Carbno and Caroline Teyssier, Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (GETC); Mr. Erik Kastlander, Information Management Working Group (IMWG); Ms. Marina Skuric-Prodanovic (GCCG Chair); Ms. Randa Hassan; Ms. Annarita Marcantonio, Mr. Mate Bagossy, (GCCG Secretariat), Ms. Bernadette Dabbak (OCHA – Coordination Mapping).

Invitees: Ms. Mervat Shelbaya and Ms. Tanja Schuemer-Cross (IASC Secretariat); Mr. Giancarlo Cirri (WFP).

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
The GCCG Chair provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, which was adopted by the GCCG, with the addition of a follow up point on the first retreat session at the request of the GNC. The GCCG Chair informed the group about the departure of Mr. Bruno Minjauw, GFSC Coordinator and that Ms. Naouar Labidi would represent the GFSC. She also introduced Ms. Michelle Brown as new GEC Co-lead and Ms. Bernadette Dabbak who had joined OCHA and will be supporting the Global Clusters on coordination mapping. • **Follow-up on previous GCCG meetings (action points, summary record, etc)** • The Chair informed that the next OPAG meeting will be on 24 March and asked if there were GCCs who would be willing to volunteer to represent the GCCG together with her in this and any subsequent meetings for the next couple of months on a rotating basis. Ms. Jennifer Chase expressed her willingness to do so. The GCCG Chair thanked them and said she would reach out to them individually as meeting opportunities come up. **Coordination mapping:** • Ms. Hassan (GCCG-S) thanked all GCs and their field teams for their support to the process. As of 10 March 2021 the completion rate of both OCHA and Cluster surveys stands at 60 percent. The deadline for submitting the survey has been extended by a week, until 12 March 2021, OCHA will reach out to colleagues in the field encouraging completion. • GLC mentioned that the occurrence of several parallel surveys might have confused some of the respondents and suggested following up bilaterally with the GCCG-S. The Chair acknowledged the point about overlaps of different surveys and said that the aim would be to look at better spacing of different global level surveys and processes for next year. **Field support:** • **Burkina Faso** ICCG workshop: After thanking the GCs involved in facilitating the workshop, Ms. Hassan provided to the Group a brief outline of the topics covered, commenting that the main issues highlighted in the workshop were: 1) how to better operationalize the ICCG; 2) how to better strengthen links between the ICCG and the HCT; and 3) how to improve communication within the ICCG. Ms. Annarita Marcantonio, GCCG Secretariat, updated the GCCG on the following: • Debrief of discussion with Ethiopia CO and clusters: A number of GCs and AoRs had a call with OCHA Ethiopia, which focused on the Tigray crisis, highlighting its food security and protection aspects, which impact other clusters too. Access constraints to the region remain a concern, and while there has been some improvement, access to field locations remains nearly impossible and the independence of humanitarian actors is a concern.	1. GCCG-Secretariat to coordinate with volunteer GCCs about which GCC will represent the GCCG in the next OPAG meeting. 2. GCCG-S to follow up with the GLC for clarification about the Coordination Mapping. 3. GCCG-S to follow up with GCCs volunteering to support the Cameroon ISWG workshop and Burundi ISWG retreat.

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
- GHC emphasized that Ethiopia was a complex emergency and that there was a need for scale up of operations, particularly as many partners had worked in a development context and needed cluster support now. Small improvements in access must be used in a coordinated manner and resources should be pooled whenever possible, especially around IM, and coordination needs to be strengthened, particularly at the sub-national level. All clusters need to integrate protection risk mitigation into their plans. On its part, GHC has had two meetings with partners to emphasize these messages and is having weekly meetings with its partners. It will also be discussing Ethiopia at its annual meeting in April and looking at how much the fact that Ethiopia is a nexus country might have (or not) enabled their readiness and preparedness. - GBV AoR concurred that the fact that development-focused interventions had been the norm in Ethiopia has an impact on humanitarian coordination, in the sense that organisations on the ground are hesitant to jeopardise development programmes and relations with the government. Deployments to Ethiopia are challenging in terms of permissions, which makes it harder to send surge support to the field. - GPC confirmed it was trying to strengthen coordination in Tigray. - CCCM informed GCCs that the CCCM Cluster in Ethiopia had been detached from the Protection Cluster and will now be a stand-alone cluster, co-led nationally by IOM and UNHCR, with a local NGO as co-chair. There have been a number of difficulties with the cluster activation process in Ethiopia, similar to a recent cluster activation process in Mozambique, where objections were expressed about the original letter of activation and the co-chairing of the cluster. The activation process appears on occasion unclear to some of the actors that have taken part in it, and is a problem that needs to be addressed in the future. - GBV AoR added that there were other issues related to clusters and Ethiopia. For example Child Protection and GBV AoR had worked very well together for years, but it seems that for the recent CERF proposal OCHA had said that only one agency per cluster could receive funding and therefore neither CP AoR nor GBV AoR received funding. - MA AoR added that the AoR had been asked through the RC to support MA partners in Ethiopia, without considering for the moment a formal activation of the AoR. - GSC informed the group that it had deployed a person three weeks ago who would be based in Mekele and clarified that the Shelter Cluster there was led by IOM. **Burundi:** The ISWG is holding a retreat on 16 and 17 March and has requested GCCG support for a one-hour session on 16 March about cluster roles and responsibilities. **Cameroon:** There is a request for an online training for the ISWG, starting first with national level then proceeding towards sub-national level workshops. Ms. Marcantonio enquired whether there would be GCCs willing to support the Cameroon national level workshop, which will be delivered in three half-days during April 2021, as well as the Burundi retreat, for which one or two volunteers are needed. Both will be delivered in French. GHC and CCCM GC indicated their possible participation in both the retreat and the training, while GBV AoR and GSC confirmed their willingness to support the Burundi retreat. **South Sudan:** GNC updated the group on a call about South Sudan in which GWC, GHC, GFSC and GNC met with the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). BHA had underlined that the risk of famine must be prioritized more by the HCT. GHC added there was follow up with OCHA South Sudan where it was stressed there is a need for stronger sub-national coordination, increased OCHA advocacy to donors due to non-availability of resources, and better collocation between clusters, in particular health and nutrition. Some donors consider the clusters are not undertaking the roles they are expected to, with a review of the cluster approach in the country being a possible future discussion point. GFSC concurred on the importance of strengthening sub-national coordination and the scale of the response. **Follow up on Libya P2P**: The Chair summarized the main issues that were shared with the GCCG during the P2P debriefing to the Group on 27 January 2021 and enquired about follow up actions taken by GCs in response to these, as well as possible collective actions required by the GCCG.	4. GCCG-S to follow up bilaterally with GBV AoR on Ethiopia CERF proposal process. 5. GCCG-S to follow up with OCHA South Sudan on cluster approach review/coordination architecture review

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
• In reaction to the Libya P2P follow up, GLC and GNC both highlighted the difficulties of effectively following up on the recommendations due to lack of resources and the importance of this being addressed. GNC added that the Nutrition Cluster was not activated in Libya and that was another example of cluster activations that needed to be sorted out. • GSC informed that it has recently appointed a new cluster coordinator in country, and pointed out the challenge of limited local partner capacity in shelter, coupled with the complex setting, including insecurity, which hampered scale up. The Chair also pointed out that as the P2P mission identified solid local NGO capacity, and enquired whether funding was the main obstacle, or there were additional concerns. GSC clarified that there was both limited funding and national shelter partner capacity. • Finally, GBV AoR informed that it has improved capacity since late 2020 with a dedicated coordinator and additional IM capacity being provided by the Regional Office.	
1. OPAG expectations on GCCG Terms of Reference Ms. Mervat Shelbaya, Chief of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Secretariat, briefed the Group on the outcomes of the Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) regarding the modification of the GCCG ToR and the possible co-chairmanship of the GCCG. To put the discussion in context, she noted that the IASC Principals recommended in late 2020 the extension of the mandate of the IASC structures, including all entities associated with the IASC and accountable to the OPAG (including the GCCG). There were a few specific requests; 1) strengthening the links between the OPAG and the Emergency Directors Group (EDG), 2) clarifying the role of the Deputies' forum, 3) reviewing and streamlining wok and possible structures reporting to the OPAG - namely the results groups and entities associated with the IASC. OPAG recognized the importance of the critical work being done by the GCCG and recommended maintaining it as an entity associated with the IASC. A number of OPAG members emphasized the need to reinforce the GCCG's links with the EDG. Furthermore, the OPAG requested that co-chairmanship arrangements of the Group (with OCHA holding one of the co-Chair roles and the other to be on a rotational basis), with a consideration of an NGO co-Chair. The intention behind OPAG's recommendation is to give frontline responders the opportunity to have meaningful engagement in most global coordination structures and in that spirit OPAG had brought in NGOs in its membership. Finally, Ms. Shelbaya noted that the discussion / decision by the IASC Principals on the new IASC strategic priorities and the required structures to take them forward had been postponed from May until the end of the year, in light of the imminent departure of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. **Discussion:** • Ms. Shelbaya suggested that a decision should be made quickly on the co-Chairmanship arrangements as this was a request of the OPAG from 5 November 2020. As such, it should not be directly tied to the revision of the ToRs. • CCCM underlined that global clusters represent all their members equally regardless of whether they are UN or NGOs and pass messages being the voice of local partners. The solution is not necessarily bringing more actors to coordinate, since the voice of the NGO community is very much present in terms of co-chairing in the field. Global actions should be localized, rather than local actions globalized, and if a change is to be made, it should be part of an overall revision of the system. IASC discussions should be done in a systematic way and rather than criticize certain aspects of the system, including the cluster approach, there should a systematic review of the whole system. Finally, cluster lead agencies are host agencies for the clusters (rather than lead agencies) and cluster coordinators neutrally dispense their functions, but also hold overall accountability.	6. GCCG-S to organize a quick survey to determine co-chairmanship preferences among GCs

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
• The Chair noted the diversity of opinions on the matter within the Group in past discussions. She noted that in the past one GCC (the only NGO Global Cluster co-lead) had suggested that NGOs might actually not be interested in the co-chair function. She also enquired about the possibilities the Group had in terms of partly or entirely following up the OPAG recommendations. • Ms. Shelbaya stressed that bringing in local NGOs diversifies the discussions. She advised the GCCG to consider this recommendation and revert with a decision, including a strong rationale, with regard to the selection of the co-Chair. It is therefore for the Group to decide on the most adequate co-chairmanship arrangement and present a clear rationale to OPAG. However, if the GCCG decided not to select an NGO as Co-Chair, it would be a good step to have an NGO representative as observer in the GCCG, potentially an NGO that is co-chair or co-lead on the ground to bring a fresh field perspective. She noted that the draft TOR for the GCCG were quite strong, that the field support aspect was critical; as such, the TOR could be finalized quickly. • The Chair noted that the TOR specify the chairing and membership in their current form, and hence were the only real outstanding issues to resolve before the TOR are finalized. • Ms. Serdaroglu (GSC) commented that the inclusion of NGOs within the GCCG should aim to bring real value, for which the co-chairmanship is perhaps not the best arrangement, and emphasized the time that was needed to reach the current structure, that appears to work well for most GCs. • GLC enquired if there had been any proposals on how to strengthen GCCG / EDG linkages. • Mr. Cirri (WFP) proposed reflecting about how NGOs and INGOs could be better integrated and have a voice within the GCCG and expressed his concern about pushback within the group on NGO involvement. He said it was unclear to him whether a decision had been made on the reporting line. As the group has a more natural link to the EDG and should therefore perhaps report to the EDG but obviously would need to also have a link to the OPAG. • GHC underlined that it was the only GC actively supporting having an NGO co-chair for the GCCG, and expressed surprise about having GCCs resisting the idea of NGO co-chairmanship. GSC (Mr. Moore) expressed his support for bringing in an NGO. • The Chair sought clarification on the timelines by which the GCCG needed to revert to OPAG. • Ms. Shelbaya commended some of the positive GCC remarks on NGO co-chairmanship and suggested that the GCCG consider this option favorably, noting that this could be a rotating position. With regard to linkages to the OPAG vs. the EDG, no particular decisions have been taken and there is probably no appetite to shift official structures at this stage. However, there is a need to be practical in terms of field support. Linkages with the EDG would come naturally; particularly as most Global Cluster Coordinators report to the Emergency Directors on the EDG. However, there is value in connections to the OPAG, particularly as work is being taken in the IASC to roll out some of the work on cross-cutting issues. She also encouraged for GCCs to actively participate in the work of the Results Groups. • The GCCG Chair also noted that there was an outstanding action point related to OPAG and EDG needing to have a follow up discussion to clarify and expand further on how the relationship between the GCCG and EDG could be strengthened. • On the timelines, a slot has been allocated for the GCCG to present a general update to the OPAG on 8 September 2021 (tbc), which would be the ideal moment to present a decision on the co-chairmanship. Ms. Shelbaya ended by saying she will enquire with OPAG Co-Chairs and let the GCCG-S know if this was not the case. • The Chair noted that the discussion on finalizing the TOR/ Co-Chair issue would be followed up with the GCCG.	
2. Update on JIAG/JIAF GWC provided a short update on the engagement between the GCCG and the Joint Intersectoral Analytical Framework (JIAF). The JIAF Steering Committee is likely to be integrated within the HPC Steering Committee. The structure of the JIAF will need to be revisited, the question being now what the structure of the Joint Intersectoral Analysis	7. GWC and GHC to send a written update and present on the JIAF/JIAG point during next GCCG meeting

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
Group is and how it will relate to the different working groups. In brief, GWC and GHC will provide further details to the GCCG ahead of the next GCCG meeting to allow for a more detailed discussion.	
• **AOB** GNC commented that guidance could be developed to help countries advocating for minimum resources for coordination at national and subnational level. GNC offered to lead in drafting the guidance and enquired about other GCs willing to join the work, noting that GWC and CP AoR already volunteered. **Upcoming GCCG meetings: 19 March 2021**, 16 April 2021 • COVID update • CCCM requested to present to the GCCG in March the 'Minimum Standards for Camp Management' • Briefing by UN Habitat on RG1 draft Framework for engagement between local governments and humanitarian actors. • JIAF	
3. Cluster activation and accountability. GCCG Retreat session II. Ms. Ela Serdaroglu, GSC, presented a summary of inputs received from GCCs on the 'Cluster activation and accountability topic of the Stepping Back to Look Forward exercise. GCCs identified three main areas of concern: ambiguity in cluster activation and deactivation processes; definition of the role of co-leads and co-chairs; and the lack of clarity and guidance in exit strategy and cluster deactivation. GCCs provided various suggestions related to the improvement of cluster accountability, such as having a readily available list of activated clusters, a standardization on responsibilities among Cluster Lead Agencies, and the support to coordination structures working towards transition and deactivation. The full summary of the issues identified and related recommendations will be shared separately.	8. GCCG-S to prepare with GSC the summary retreat session II