Global Cluster Coordination Group (GCCG) meeting – 21 July 2021
Summary of discussion and action points

Participants: Mr. Pablo Medina, Mr. Brett Moore and Mr. Miguel Urquia, Global Shelter Cluster (GSC); Mr. Stefano Fedele, Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC); Ms. Wan Sophonpanich and Mr. Bruce Spires, Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM); Ms. Naouar Labidi, Global Food Security Cluster (GFSC); Ms. Linda Doull, Global Health Cluster (GHC); Ms. Athalie Mayo, Global Logistics Cluster (GLC); Ms. Celine Maret, Global Protection Cluster (GPC); Ms. Jennifer Chase, Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR); Ms. Michelle Brown, Global Education Cluster (GEC); Ms. Monica Ramos, Global WASH Cluster (GWC); Ms. Caroline Teyssier, Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC); Ms. Christelle Loupforest, Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR); Ms. Marina Skuric Prodanovic (GCCG Chair); Ms. Randa Hassan, Ms. Janet Puhalovic, Mr. Mate Bagossy, (GCCG Secretariat).

Invitees: Ms. Reena Ghelani (Chair, Emergency Director's Group, EDG); Mr. Farhad Movahed (IASC Secretariat); Ms. Claudia Rodriguez Burrell (Head of OCHA HAT Colombia); Mr. Stephen O'Malley (Director, P2P); Ms. Anne France White (P2P); Mr. Venkatesh Naik (P2P).

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
The GCCG Chair provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, which was adopted by the GCCG. **Follow-up on previous GCCG meetings (action points, summary record, etc)** • The Chair updated the group on the completion status of the follow-up items from the GCCG meeting of 23 June 2021.	
Briefing on EDG mission to Ethiopia Ms. Reena Ghelani (Chair, Emergency Director's Group, EDG) thanked the GCs for their support to field counterparts and briefed the group about the EDG mission to Ethiopia that took place from 5 to 12 July 2021. The EDG mission was composed of three NGO representatives and five UN agencies. The mission visited Tigray and met with both federal and local/regional authorities. The mission was able to go to newly accessible locations in central and northeast Tigray and met communities that had been isolated for months and experienced significant traumas. **Key takeaways:** 1- **Destruction of basic services**: The mission observed a deliberate and systematic destruction of basic services: health, water provision, livelihoods and education. This was confirmed by assessments conducted by several clusters. The absence of a functional health system is a top concern as seasonal increase in communicable diseases is expected. 2- **Protection**: Extensive terror is being used, including widespread sexual violence affecting women of all age groups. 3- **Nutrition**: Spot-checking identified a global acute malnutrition rate of 30 percent, this indicator has usually stood at around 8 to 9 percent in that region. 4- **Maternal mortality**: Increased number of maternal deaths was reported in the clinics visited. 5- **Health**: Disease outbreaks were reported in several instances, WHO is working with partners to set up alert systems and respond on time to these outbreaks. • **The situation in Tigray has reached a turning point**, with millions of people in need and continued obstacles to the provision of basic services. These obstacles are causing shortages of fuel, cash and supplies amid damaged water points and a collapsing health system. • **The three priorities are provision of food, clean water and health services.** • Agencies have run out of cash for humanitarian programming, fuel reserves are sufficient for only one week, and currently food support is available until the end of July 2021. • Access remains challenging, with many checkpoints and ongoing conflict. • There is an urgent need to support the teams on the ground through concerted UN and NGO efforts in view of the system-wide Scale-Up activation.	1. GCCG-S to share the EDG mission report with the GCCG when available.

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
- Due to the operational environment and communication difficulties in Tigray, decision-making must be decentralized, strengthening clusters in Tigray. - Note: Decentralisation could be complicated by new government guidelines stating that all humanitarian actions need prior approval. Local authorities may also start to supervise response activities - Emergency teams in the field urgently require additional operational staffing. **Discussion** - The Chair noted that Ethiopia is an emergency regularly discussed by the group and encouraged Ms. Ghelani to outline specific priorities for Global Clusters. - CCCM (Wan Sophonpanich)- who joined the meeting from Mekelle where she is on surge- agreed with Ms. Ghelani's briefing and underlined the access challenges and lack of resources. She emphasized the difficulty of deploying operations staff and the need to keep a balance between operational and coordination staff under the current conditions. - CCCM is carrying out IDP household intention surveys in Mekelle and Shire. Initial findings of the surveys are being discussed with the government, specifically around return and relocation options now that access is opening up within Tigray. - As new areas become accessible inside Tigray, there are discussions on expanding geographical coverage and encouraging joint distributions. - There is an unclear positioning of the ICCG about returns. As new areas become accessible, return possibilities need to be evaluated carefully, with the imperative of respecting the right to movement of the displaced population. - The ICCG is attended by a large number of actors, many seeking information that is otherwise unavailable. The lack of communication networks requires a shift in the way operations are conducted. - Decentralization is needed, as Ms. Ghelani underlined. Besides decentralizing capacity to the regional hub of Mekelle, there is a need to shift resources further West and to smaller hubs within the Tigray region. - There is a lack of NGO leadership at subnational level, with the exception of the Shelter Cluster. Clusters can do more to address this. - Key actions needed are: 1) working on where the ICCG stands on durable solutions and 2) increase staffing for coordination. Staffing for coordination needs to use more of the actual capacity on the ground. - GWC noted challenges with staffing and difficulties getting the field support team into the country. - Mekelle is the entry point for subnational coordination and working with more local groups and partners. UNICEF has opened up more positions in Mekelle and Shire for achieving basic coordination in the field. - GWC is looking for additional partners to link up with, seeking co-leads in some of the coordination platforms. - GWC observed a high demand for additional coordination platforms. GWC has been working remotely with teams in Addis and Mekelle. There have been discussions for a joint mapping with Nutrition and Food Security clusters. - Discussions have also taken place about cholera with the authorities and the Global Task Force on Cholera Control. - A Coordinator and Information Manager are going to be deployed, and GWC is looking at sending an assessment specialist to the field. Staff would normally stay for three months but will be needed for longer, a challenge for which solutions are being explored. Advocacy will also be needed to secure funding for this surge. - GWC had anticipated the need for scale up and is now supporting the field operationally as well as with the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) processes. - Ms. Ghelani underlined three priorities: getting the health workers back to work, providing clean water, and ensuring the food and nutritional response is scaled-up. Partners have a month to take action before the situation significantly deteriorates.	

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
• There is an urgent need for operational staff and necessity of getting personnel to deploy for longer periods. • The Chair enquired if a GCCG follow-up mission is something Ms. Ghelani would recommend. • Ms. Ghelani noted that the priority is for operational support and staff deploying for longer periods. The field is already overwhelmed with missions - if longer-term field support by GCs is not possible, then dedicated remote support would be preferable. Individual clusters on the ground can be approached about need for support from GCs. • GHC asked whether there was a plan by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and Principals to reinforce advocacy in response to the critical situation, noting that advocacy has been very quiet considering the scale of the emergency. • Ms. Ghelani stated that advocacy was taking place on a continuous basis including at high levels, with the Secretary-General also engaged in the effort. The ERC is expected to be on the ground before the end of July and will discuss a number of pressing issues. The current strategy is to promote advocacy through face to face meetings at high level. • GPC updated the group on the protection situation in Tigray. She underlined the numerous reports about increased GBV, violence, trafficking and massive displacement, as well as concerns about the civilian character of the IDP sites. These questions have been taken up by the Protection cluster in country, emphasizing also the need to provide physical security to IDPs and host communities. Reports indicate many people want to return to their homes but they need specific assistance to do so. A Return Working Group is going to be established with the objective of facilitating structured return and providing assistance to IDPs wishing to return. The Protection Cluster is finalizing its strategy and workplan. • CCCM pointed out at the risk of differentiating enrolment and return and linking these together. CCCM suggested to discuss this bilaterally with GPC. • The Chair emphasized the message about the need for decentralization shared by Ms. Ghelani and enquired whether ETC could do something in terms of improving telecommunications. Noting that a GCCG mission to Ethiopia is not recommended at the moment, GCs are individually encouraged to reach out to clusters for support. • Mr. Movahed noted that the Ethiopia EDG mission report is being finalized and is expected to be ready for sharing shortly. • GBV AoR expressed interest in a bilateral meeting with CCCM to discuss CCCM's field observations about GBV.	
Update on P2P mission to Libya Mr. Stephen O'Malley (P2P Director) expressed his interest in continuing the collaboration with the group and described the structure of the P2P project team, noting that the biggest change in the model is the recruitment of eight former Humanitarian Coordinators and senior officials to be the team leads for future missions. Ms. Anne France White (P2P) briefed the group on the follow up of the Libya P2P mission and its recommendations, reminding that Mr. Kevin Kennedy, who led the Libya mission, had briefed the group on 27 January. Ms. White underlined that significant progress had been achieved in the action plan since this date. **The action plan included seven pillars:** 1) Improving the humanitarian narrative 2) Linkages to local NGOs 3) Establishing a stronger operational presence in Libya 4) Improving data quality 5) Accountability to affected populations and PSEA 6) Better resourcing of sectors 7) Capitalizing on the contextual opportunities to improve the response. • By the end of June 2021, half of the recommendations have been addressed and the other half are being completed, with two exceptions; a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)	2. P2P to check if the status of follow up actions from the Libya P2P and coordination review can be shared with the GCCG.

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
workshop is pending, and advocating with donors to support national NGOs has been put on a hold. The reason for this is that many donors are scaling down their support and shifting towards nexus-type activities. There is also some uncertainty whether there will be an HRP next year. • **Key challenges related to pillar six 'resourcing of sectors'** are: office space and accommodation in Libya; visas for staff; funding as many sectors are double hatted; there is a shortage of both coordinators and information managers. • A number of actions have been taken so far: The Inter-sector Coordination Group (ISCG) has agreed to carry out coordinated missions to the field to ensure sector coverage until the accommodation challenges are resolved. OCHA has offered to provide office space for sector coordinators and is working to facilitate visa processes, which is another key obstacle. Also, there are now quarterly meetings between the ISCG and the GHD to update donors and advocate for funding. • As part of the action plan, sector membership has been limited only to agencies that are operational. • The HCT is going to review if the coordination structure is still fit for purpose, if this is the case, OCHA will encourage agencies to relocate their coordinators to Tripoli and ensure staff are fully dedicated and gaps between deployments limited. • The following areas require attention going forward; engagement with local actors, data collection, working space, visa issues, and the adoption of an HCT compact. **Discussion** • The Chair enquired whether the status of follow up actions from the P2P mission to Libya is a document that could be shared with the GCCG, noting that in the past GCs had been engaged in coordination architecture reviews in a number of contexts. In terms of engagement with national partners, during the discussion about Libya on 27 January 2021 some sectors had pointed out the difficulty of finding suitable national partners. • GNC noted that he had discussions with UNICEF in Libya to ensure there is capacity for sector coordination in nutrition. Is important to have a systematic coordination that can benefit from the guidance of the GNC. • Ms. White agreed to enquire about the possibility of sharing the status of follow up actions document and the coordination review with the GCCG. As for local actors, she underlined that the P2P mission had the opportunity of meeting with local actors operating in the South of Libya, who expressed their concerns of being cut off from the main coordination sectors. Following the P2P mission, partners agreed to include the sector support in the HRP under both coordination and common services, funding has however not materialized and advocacy from GCs would be welcomed to support this. • Responding to a question by GFSC, Ms. White clarified that the HRP that was mentioned above refers to 2022.	
Update on situation in Colombia Ms. Claudia Rodriguez Burrell (Head of the HAT in Colombia) updated the group on the humanitarian context in Colombia, the priorities of the HCT and the reconfiguration of the humanitarian architecture. **Context** • The country is in a phase of reconfiguration of the conflict. The space left by the demobilization of the FARC after the peace agreement has been occupied by a variety of armed groups who are vying for expanded territorial control. This has translated into more emergencies, displacement and deteriorating protection indicators. Colombia has two differentiated aspects - one of a middle-income country, and the other of peripheral regions, with limited or sometimes no access to state services where gaps are covered by humanitarian actors. • COVID-19 had a significant impact on protection and food security.	3. Ms. Rodriguez to gauge the interest for a GCCG mission to Colombia during the next HCT meeting 4. GFSC to reach out to the cluster in country about having a stand-alone Nutrition cluster.

Summary of Discussion	Action Points

- The country is experiencing a low intensity conflict that affects a significant number of people. Between 5 and 7 million people are estimated to live in areas under the influence of armed groups and humanitarian action is much needed in areas where state capacities are limited.

Priorities of the HCT

- The humanitarian situation is expected to deteriorate in the coming period. Protection is the top priority. The HCT is working on a strategy of protection by presence, trying to recover the space abandoned during mobility restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Limited financial resources and capacities oblige the HCT to focus on rapid response to emergencies, mass displacement and confinement.
- Access has been more challenging since 2020, the HCT is working in an access strategy.
- Indigenous communities constitute 80 percent of the affected population in terms of displacement and confinement. The HCT is trying to strengthen the decentralized response capacities and field coordination to better target these populations.

Reconfiguration of the humanitarian structure

- In 2020, the Government of Colombia requested OCHA to submit an exit plan, then COVID-19 started and a response plan was prepared. In November 2020 the Government reiterated their request for OCHA to cease its operations in the country and eliminate the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) role.
- The ERC agreed that the HC will not be automatically designated and a Resident Coordinator (RC) will instead assume humanitarian responsibilities. The OCHA office has lowered its profile and officially shifted into a Humanitarian Advisory Team (HAT) whilst maintaining its operational capacities. These changes are effective from 1 July 2021.
- OCHA presented in early 2021 a reconfiguration plan to the government, recommending that the humanitarian architecture in Colombia remains in place under the leadership of the RC and supported by the HAT. The government has not officially responded to these recommendations. Any change to overall humanitarian coordination architecture would require a P2P mission in country to evaluate the situation and issue specific recommendations.
- While the political situation is complex, the humanitarian response needs to continue and be strengthened, clusters are needed and field coordination has the utmost importance.
- OCHA has become a HAT but retains its capacities and functions and clusters are expected to continue operating. An HNO and HRP are being prepared for 2022, GCs are encouraged to support clusters in the field with its preparation.

Discussion

- GBV AoR asked Ms. Rodriguez if a GCCG mission to Colombia would be something useful to the teams in the ground.
- GNC enquired about the possibility of reopening a discussion about a separate Nutrition Cluster (NC); the NC is currently integrated within the Food Security Cluster and this arrangement is not very efficient. Colombia is an ideal country to address this, as there is a need to link up emergency response with resilience building. Poor nutrition in the country does often cause an increase in number of people who are overweight, rather than malnutrition, especially among indigenous populations.
  This complex situation would benefit from a nutrition specific approach. The global GNC position is that nutrition requires a specific sectoral or cluster coordination mechanism. The GNC is actively supporting many countries without activated clusters for strengthening their national coordination capacity.
- Ms. Rodriguez welcomed the idea of a GCCG mission at a technical level. She said that
- HCT meeting during the last week of July could be used the gauge the HCT's interest for a GCCG mission before proceeding with drafting the ToR.
- Mine Action (MA) AoR asked about the impression of the HAT in relation to the work done by the MA AoR and if there are any specific recommendations for this AoR.
- GFSC enquired whether changes in the humanitarian coordination architecture could still be requested by the authorities and whether the recommendations submitted to the

Summary of Discussion	Action Points

government (no HC and OCHA shifts to a HAT) are expected to receive a formal response. Responding to the Nutrition Cluster's comments, the GFSC stated that while she would be in support of a stand-alone Nutrition Cluster in Colombia, it would be helpful to better understand the reasons why the NC Coordinator was advocating for a stand-alone Nutrition Cluster and that she would discuss with the CLA in country.
• GBV AoR enquired about the planned senior OCHA mission to Colombia.
• GLC highlighted the good experience of the Logistics Cluster in Colombia in terms of regional coordination and collaboration with the authorities and expressed her wish to develop similar constructive relations with other countries in the region.
• Ms. Rodriguez noted the excellent relationship with the Mine Action AoR.
  - The expectation is that the demand for MA AoR activities will increase. Many communities have their movements restricted due to mines and the collaboration with MA AoR must continue.
  - The main reason for the government to promote changes in the humanitarian architecture appears to be visibility; this concern has now been addressed with the changes implemented on 1 July 2021. It is uncertain whether there will be a formal response to the recommendations submitted, meanwhile, humanitarian coordination and response efforts need to continue.
  - There are also positive developments to consider: the country has for the first time in 10 years an HRP that is agreed with the government. The government is unlikely to pressure in favour of dismantling the humanitarian architecture, but it dislikes humanitarian actors speaking up about conflict, thus communication and advocacy are challenging and need to be done carefully.
  - A visit by Ms. Ghelani, EDG Chair to Colombia is planned for the coming months.
  - The government is an excellent partner in all matters related to natural disasters and climate change.	

Stepping Back to Look Forward (SBLF): next steps The Chair summarised the SBLF exercise and steps that have been taken so far and reminded the group that a document with key elements was shared with the GCCG for comments by 26 July 2021. Ms. Janet Puhalovic, (GCCG-S) reminded the group that t**hree SBLF sessions have taken place**: 1) Cluster Performance, Efficiency, and Effectiveness, 2) Cluster Activation, Deactivation, and Accountability and 3) Inter-cluster coordination. **An aggregated summary of all three sessions was prepared**, together with a recommendations matrix and a list of topics for discussion. It is suggested that the matrix as well as the list of topics for discussion be incorporated into the GCCG work plan and meeting schedule respectively. Of the 18 recommendations included in the matrix, six of them focused on raising critical issues to the Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG). These included: 1. Ensuring Cluster Lead Agencies (CLA) represent both the agency and the cluster at the HCT. 2. Establishing minimum coordination staffing benchmarks. 3. Ensuring that CLAs have an internal governance framework for investment in cluster coordination. 4. Potentially revising the Cluster Coordination Reference Module to accommodate the terms and definitions and possible guidance on the humanitarian-development nexus. 5. Establishing guidance for support to sectors/working groups in non-activated cluster settings or transition contexts. 6. Developing a cluster transition indicative timeline and template for an exit strategy. **<u>Discussion</u>** • GPC pointed out that the timeframe of the CCPM is not mentioned in the document, it should be ensured that the CCPM starts after the HNO and HRP processes.	5. GCCs to provide their comments to the summary document by 26 July 2021 6. GCCG-S to organise a meeting with the SBLF "small group" to discuss proposals for next steps.

Summary of Discussion	Action Points
• Ms. Hassan noted that having a discussion with an ICCG at every GCCG meeting was unlikely. It was more realistic to plan for periodic exchanges (e.g. quarterly) with ICCGs. • The Chair encouraged GCCs to provide comments to the document and emphasized that some of the questions raised during the SBLF process go beyond the capacity of the GCCG and will need to involve the OPAG. The Chair asked for GCC volunteers to take part in a smaller group conversation to determine how to move forward on the SBLF exercise and encouraged GCCs who led on the topics to share their ideas. The way forward on the SBLF will be discussed at the next GCCG meeting.	
AOB • The Chair reminded the group that the deadline for comments on the CLARE II evaluation is on 22 July 2021. Comments are to be submitted directly to UNICEF. **Upcoming GCCG meetings:** 1 September 2021, 2 – 4 p.m. (GVA) Forward agenda: GCCG workplan SBLF	7. GCs to submit their comments on the CLARE II evaluation to UNICEF.