

GCCG Meeting

24 May 2023, 14:00 – 16.00 GVA time

Participant/Global Cluster: Jim Robinson and Ombretta Tempra (HLP), Ron Pouwels (CP); Dher Al-Hayo and Wan Sophonpanich (CCCM); Jennifer Chase (GBV); Erik Kastlander (IMWG); Brent Carbone (ETC); Mailin Fauchon (GLC); Michelle Brown (GEC); Nisar Syed (UNICEF-led Global Clusters Rep), Abdul Majid and Marie-Helene Kyprianou (GFSC), Monica Ramos (GWC), Briony Stevens and Stefano Fedele (GNC), Linda Doull (GHC), Roberto Paganini (Early Recovery), Brett Moore (GSC), Ela Serdaroglu (Shelter), Mary Pack and Marina Skuric-Prodanovic (Co-Chairs), Annarita Marcantonio, Randa Hassan and Muchun Wan (GCCG secretariat).

Invitees: Ms. Martha Getachew Metaferia, Mr. Sebastian Rhodes-Stampa, and Mr. Farhad Movahed (OCHA).

Summary and action points

Welcome and agenda overview

1. Ms. Marina Skuric-Prodanovic, Co-Chair, welcomed participants and provided a brief overview of the agenda. No proposed changes to the agenda were brought forward and the agenda was adopted. The order of agenda items was modified to accommodate the availability of presenters.

Updates and follow-up on GCCG action points

2. Ms. Skuric provided an update on recent IASC meetings and pending action points from previous GCCG meetings. IASC Task Forces (TF) 1 and 5 met during the period since the last GCCG meeting. Webinars were being organized which complement those being developed by the GCCG Localization Task Force, and progress was noted on developing a paper on financing on localization. The HPC Steering Group met on 9 May. Ms. Skuric thanked GFSC for their comments to one of the background documents, and encouraged other GCCs to be proactive in sharing comments ahead of the HPC Steering Group meetings. The HPC Steering Group will meet next on 15 June. JIAF Advisory Group (JAG) and the Steering Committee met on 4 and 15 May respectively. PMU requested GCCs to prioritize participation in various activities and the JIAF 2.0 rollout phase between June and December. Clusters noted that they faced challenges in being requested to identify colleagues to attend training at a very short notice. Others said they planned to send staff to the upcoming trainings but were struggling to identify funding. GCCs reiterated the importance of better planning from PMU side in the future to enable cluster participation in trainings. Mr. Abdul Majid (GFSC) said that in his capacity as GCCG focal point for the JIAF he had relayed the GCCs' concerns during the Steering Committee meeting and the need to have cluster capacity to support JIAF implementation. Ms. Skuric summed up the two takeaways from GCCs on JIAF: (i) commitment is needed from all JIAF partners (including PMU and donors) to fund clusters so they can roll out and implement JIAF, and (ii) any trainings for 2024 should be flagged by June/July 2023 to allow for budget planning. It was agreed that GFSC would write to the JIAF PMU to relay these concerns.
3. On pending action points, Ms. Skuric thanked CCCM for their comments to the *Advisory Note on Advancing the HNP Nexus Approach through IASC Global Clusters*, and stressed the importance for GCCs to send comments for such documents in the future before they go to the OPAG for endorsement. The paper on the summary of findings and recommendations from the 2022 Iraq transition has been sent to Ms. Edem Wosornu as the new Chair of the EDG. Follow up will be made in about two-weeks' time after she has settled into the role. There has been no response from OPAG on the terms and definitions paper; the next OPAG meeting could be an opportunity to address updates from IASC Associated Entities including the GCCG. Ms. Skuric thanked CCCM for taking part in the interview with the co-chairs of the IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action (GRG). Comments were provided to the updated 2023 IASC Gender Policy. The inception report of the IDP Review was shared with the GCCG on 19 May. On the menu of operations, Mr. Abdul Majid said that the document would soon be circulated to the GCCs for final comments. Finally, Ms. Skuric requested GCCs to continue updating the common calendar and reminded that the annual retreat in November is scheduled for 15 to 16 November. CCCM noted that the Reference Group on the IDP Review planned to meet on 16 November. Ms. Skuric said the GCCG secretariat would follow up with proposed dates of the retreat.

Action points

- i. GCCs: Relay GCCs' concerns highlighted in the discussions to PMU to identify solutions for the planned and future training.
- ii. GFSC: Circulate the menu of options document to GCCs for comments.
- iii. GCCG secretariat: Confirm GCCG retreat dates in November.

Operational updates

4. **Sudan:** Ms. Skuric welcomed Ms. Martha Getachew Metaferia, Operations and Advocacy Division of OCHA, to brief on the latest developments in Sudan. Ms. Metaferia that the ceasefire aimed to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, restore essential services and secure the withdrawal of forces from public facilities. A monetary mechanism is in place, with representation from the US as a facilitator, as well as parties to the conflict and with support from OCHA. Supplies are ready to be delivered to those in need, with 168 trucks on standby to deliver aid to four million people. Partners have been trying to expand the response from Port Sudan to other hubs, starting with Wad Madani which is being increasingly used as a supply hub. OCHA is trying to activate an Area HCT in Wad Madani, and a number of partners are looking to establish a presence including senior representation from 4 INGOs and a government office set up. WFP has reached a total of 500,000 people across the country including in Darfur, and nutrition. WASH and health assistance have also been provided. Advocacy is ongoing on easing the administrative restrictions including on visas. The Deputy PR of Sudan in New York has clarified that staff who had been in Sudan prior to the crisis would have no issues with visa issuance, while new staff would need to go through the regular procedures. Meanwhile, OCHA has continued to advocate for a lighter procedure. Sudanese authorities have expressed concern about the safety of humanitarian workers. The situation remained critical in Geneina, where the fighting has taken an intercommunal dimension with catastrophic consequences for civilians.
5. Ms. Skuric opened the floor and asked GCCs to update the cluster capacity mapping if there were any staff movements back to Port Sudan or other locations. ETC asked whether the activation letter had already been sent out, and Ms. Skuric said this would be sent to the GCCG once issued. Ms. Metaferia noted that the message on the need to prioritize deployment of cluster coordinators has been passed on from OCHA to RC/HC and DSRG. She asked GCCs to continue sharing operational updates to inform advocacy at the Headquarters level. GFSC noted that updated figures on the number of people reached would be updated, with some 750,000 people expected to have been reached.
6. **Yemen:** Ms. Linda Doull (GHC) briefed on the EDG mission to Yemen which took place from 28 April to 5 May. She highlighted challenges in addressing the high humanitarian needs in Yemen amidst an expected shrinking of funding from donors as of 2024. The upcoming HPC process would need a rethink in terms of prioritization of a downsizing response. On localization, key issues were around engagement with local partners and addressing mistrust of the international community. On nexus discussions, while humanitarian aid could potentially be scaled down as part of prioritization, this would need to come with a commitment and investment from development actors. At the same time, safe returns are still not possible without a large investment in humanitarian demining, accompanied by a significantly scaled up basic services. Mr. Farhad Movahed, EDG secretariat, complemented by noting that the mission had consisted of 11 directors – the largest in many years which showed the level of interest in the next phase for Yemen. Although the preparations for peace were positive for obvious reasons, this had not translated into meaningful pathways for handing over responsibilities to the authorities. The floor was opened for questions and none were raised. Ms. Doull concluded by highlighting the importance of supporting field colleagues in the HNO process which was expected to involve tough discussions in defining what essential humanitarian action in the Yemeni context meant going forward.
7. **Syria/ Türkiye earthquake:** Mr. Sebastian Rhodes-Stampa (OCHA) briefed on the Syria/ Türkiye earthquake response, noting that the Flash Appeal in Türkiye ended on 17 May without an extension. It was 36.6 per cent funded at USD 367 million. However, given residual humanitarian needs in the affected areas, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNCT agreed to extend the response for an additional 90 days from 18 May till 15 August. The HC designation would not be extended, and OCHA would deploy a humanitarian advisory team to provide coordination support. The humanitarian architecture would be restructured, losing the central component in Ankara, and the HCT would turn into a UNCT plus. The focus of the response would be in Gaziantep that would consolidate the previous four hubs. OCHA would continue to provide intersector coordination through the ISCG in Gaziantep. On Syria side, the scale-up was for an initial period of six months and that remained in place. Mr. Rhodes-Stampa noted the importance of taking a needs-based approach, and even if Türkiye was a middle-income country, needs remained. He urged GCCs to continue to support the response in the next 90 days. Mr. Movahed added that the official letter on deactivation on Türkiye side had just been sent out by the ERC. On the question regarding whether the HCT would continue in the 90-day period, Mr. Rhodes-Stampa clarified that the HCT would discontinue and be replaced by a UNCT plus which includes IFRC and other partners.
8. **Haiti:** Ms. Annarita Marcantonio, GCCG secretariat, informed that education, CCCM, health, nutrition, protection and GBV AoR were going to be activated and that activation letters would be shared with the GCCs once issued. The GCCG mission will take place in the first week of July with expected participation from GPC, GBV AoR and Ms. Skuric. GLC confirmation was pending. GCCs were asked to share any messages to be conveyed to the country team. Mission objectives were shared in the chatbox, and the final ToR of the mission will be shared in due course.

9. **Cyclone Mocha:** Ms. Skuric noted that the Flash Appeal was launched in response to Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar.

Action points

- iv. *GCCs: Provide support to field colleagues in Yemen as much as possible during the prioritization exercise as part of HNO.*
- v. *GCCG secretariat: Circulate final ToR of GCCG mission to Haiti to the GCCG.*

Planning for GCCG mid-year retreat

10. Ms. Pack shared a draft agenda for the GCCG mid-year retreat on 26 June, and thanked GCCs who had proposed possible topics. The agenda consisted of: (1) Review of the GCCG workplan, (2) Review of cluster reviews, and (3) Localization. It was noted that the Flagship Initiative would be brought to a regular GCCG meeting once there was progress with the pilot countries, likely in the autumn. Ms. Wan Sophonpanich (CCCM) asked for 10 to 15 minutes to present the survey to map the preparedness activities under the GCCG workplan agenda item. It was agreed that CCCM would further follow up with GWC who would lead on this session. As there was overall agreement on the overall agenda, the GCCG secretariat would reach out to individual presenters/session leads.

Action points

- vi. *GCCG secretariat: Circulate the agenda of the GCCG mid-year retreat to the group.*

Clusters feedback from annual global cluster fora/events

11. Ms. Pack invited GCCs to provide feedback from recent cluster fora/events with a view to identify trends or strategic top line issues. Mr. Jim Robinson (HLP) reported that the Global Protection Conference took place in May in Amman, with some 200 participants from protection clusters, AoRs and members of the GPC Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). Sessions covered internal assessment on GPC and AoRs, case management, centrality of protection, optimization of the protection architecture, and response to the ongoing reviews. Priorities include defining the term "general protection", exploring ways to optimize collaboration between GPC and AoRs, and addressing challenges when the Protection Cluster is not prioritized in CERF allocations. A one-pager on GP/AoR collaboration will be developed by NRC and CP AoR.
12. Mr. Brent Carbno (ETC) informed that the plenary meeting of ETC took place in Copenhagen in May, with 55 participants. The discussions primarily focused on the ETC 2025 strategy that covered partnerships, technological innovation, and local and regional preparedness. Changes have been introduced to the partnership model, which will open up the partnerships to more actors in the field and to consider everyone as an equal partner with equal voting rights, as part of ETC's efforts on localization. ETC's work on the return on investment in preparedness received positive feedback. Mr. Carbno briefly introduced the model being tested in emergencies such as Ukraine and Sudan.
13. Ms. Monica Ramos (GWC) reported that GWC two-day annual meeting took place in May in Budapest, focusing on achievements, progress and priorities. GWC's efforts on localization were discussed, through enhancing engagement of national partners through the National Coordination Platform. A monitoring system will be launched this year to track progress against localization. Women-led and women's rights organizations' work were showcased during the meeting.
14. Ms. Pack thanked the GCCs for their briefings and noted interest from other clusters to brief on their annual events during the retreat, including GHC, GSC, CCCM and GLC. Ms. Skuric proposed integrating other cluster meeting updates into the monthly GCCG meetings. She highlighted the importance of equal partnerships and localization, and enquired about the reasons behind ETC's new equal partnership model, whether they were driven by legal issues or a natural progression in the localization dialogue. Mr. Carbno clarified that there were several reasons for this: i) ETC has partners who were physically present but not actively contributing to collective outcomes; ii) the definition of localization varied between clusters, and as a service and technology cluster, engaging local partners and understanding their role was an ongoing process; iii) ETC is exploring initiatives like the Connecting Business Initiative (CBI) and learning from HNPW on ways to advance localization. He also referred to the need to move away from relying solely on international resources and technology during emergencies and work towards involving local actors effectively.

Action points

- vii. *GCCG secretariat: Provide space for GCCs to update on cluster meetings during regular GCCG meetings.*

Briefing by IM Working Group (IMWG)

15. Ms. Pack welcomed Mr. Erik Kastlander, Global IMWG Chair, to brief on the work of the IMWG. Mr. Kastlander provided an overview of recent topics discussed within the IMWG, including the Geolocated Health Facilities Data initiative, establishment of a regional GIS Community of Practice, question bank for rapid needs assessments for sudden onset crisis, HR.info migration, and progress on the DEEP (Data Entry and Exploration Platform) project, and transition from humanitarian to development and implications for IM. He also highlighted the sessions that were held during the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW): the GIMAC concept, data sharing in humanitarian emergencies, qualitative data analysis, and Natural Language Processing. Mr. Kastlander noted that the IMWG planned to have every second meeting focus on cluster-specific issues and topics related to the field going forward.
16. The floor was opened for questions. Ms. Linda Doull first shared a link of the Geolocated Health Facilities Data initiative (<https://www.who.int/data/GIS/GHFD>), and asked about the shift in the way that IM support was being provided to clusters at the country level, including reduced standby partner capacity, length of missions and pooling of IM resources. She asked if there had been any sector-wide conversations regarding this shift on the ways that clusters received IM support. Mr. Kastlander shared his observation that some donors preferred to promote stronger IM NGOs who could pool resources at the country level, instead of going through the SBP framework. OCHA was working to clarify the legal parameters of such arrangements and to ensure that they did not contradict the SBP framework. Ms. Doull further expressed the need to balance the current demand/expectation for IM support and the requirements from IASC guidance that clusters should have dedicated capacity. She highlighted that pooling resources does not necessarily meet the minimum level of support expected. Mr. Kastlander agreed that the formal requirement is to have an IM person, but the challenge was in securing enough resources to fulfill commitments to the affected people.
17. Ms. Skuric acknowledged Ms. Doull's concerns and suggested to Mr. Kastlander to initiate a more structured discussion by looking at examples of pooled IM resources as cases studies to assess effectiveness and implications. She recommended follow-up conversations between the IMWG and CLAs. Mr. Kastlander agreed that this would be worthwhile, and could start by looking at pros and cons of different modalities of IM support. It could also serve as a starting point for discussion with donors. He welcomed contributions from GCCs before presenting the findings. Ms. Pack proposed to take this up as an action point.

Action points

- viii. *IMWG with GCCs inputs: Organize a follow up discussion on the effectiveness and implications of pooling IM resources at the country level through case studies.*

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18. Ms. Randa Hassan, GCCG secretariat, provided an update on the Coordination Mapping, noting that responses were pending from only a few clusters and countries. Countries such as Libya and Iraq have low response rates due to the lack of staff on the ground. Ms. Hassan requested colleagues at the global level to complete the surveys for these countries if possible. Sudan also has a low completion rate, but follow-up actions will be left to the discretion of the clusters given the current circumstances. She said that if the number of responses remained low, Sudan may not be included in the overall analysis, but the data received would still be shared. Following data cleaning, final outcomes from the survey will be shared with the clusters.
19. Ms. Pack noted that the next GCCG meeting will be on 9 June from 14:00 to 16:00. Agenda items include operational updates, JIAF, transition and Operational Peer Review (OPR) in Ukraine. Both Ms. Pack and Ms. Doull mentioned that they would not be available to attend.