

GCCG Meeting

9 June 2023, 14:00 – 16.00 GVA time

Participant/Global Cluster:

Ron Pouwels (CP); Dher Al-Hayo and Wan Sophonpanich (CCCM); Roberto Paganini (Early Recovery); Brett Moore (GSC); Nisar Syed (UNICEF-led Global Clusters Rep); Briony Stevens (GNC); Brent Carbone (ETC); Mailin Fauchon (GLC); Jennifer Chase (GBV); Marie-Helene Kyprianou (GFSC), Monica Ramos (GWC); Nancy Polutan-Teulieres (GPC); Linda Doull (GHC); Marina Skuric-Prodanovic (Co-Chair), Randa Hassan, Mari Sawai and Muchun Wan (GCCG secretariat).

Invitees: Ms. Martha Getachew Metaferia, Mr. Stephen O'Malley, Ms. Kate Holland (UNICEF consultant).

Summary and action points

Welcome and agenda overview

1. Ms. Marina Skuric-Prodanovic, GCCG 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.

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. The HPC Steering Group will meet next on 15 June, and the agenda will include monitoring and costing. Background documents will be circulated ahead of the meeting. The joint OPAG/EDG meeting on the Flagship Initiative will take place on 23 June. Ms. Skuric and Ms. Michelle Brown (GEC) will represent the GCCG. The IASC Task Force 5 Localization Workstream 1 met on 30 May. Ms. Marie-Helene Kyprianou (GFSC) shared that TF 5 was interested in joining efforts with the GCCG workstream on localization. There will be a webinar on 6 July in Arabic, with English interpretation, to discuss representation, participation, leadership, and localization indicators focusing on MENA region. An additional webinar in French may follow.
3. On pending action points, Ms. Skuric thanked GCCs for their comments on the document on *GCCG Coordination Support to HCs, HCTs, ICCGs and clusters* circulated by Mr. Abdul Majid. The final version will be posted on the GCCG Collaborative Space for the global clusters to distribute among field colleagues as needed/appropriate. An agenda for the GCCG mid-year retreat was circulated on 2 May. Ms. Skuric also reminded GCCs to fill their availability for the GCCG retreat in November 2023. As requested in previous GCCG meeting, time will be allocated in future GCCG meetings for global clusters to update on major events and meetings. Ms. Skuric noted the various GWC meetings/trainings that took place and upcoming events by other clusters in June.

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. Getachew noted that the Pledging Event on Sudan would be held on 19 June in Geneva, co-hosted by KSA, Egypt, Qatar and Germany, EU, OCHA and UNHCR. The event will cover the needs of the HRP and the regional plan, and it aims to encourage flexible funding to new actors as well as to bring voices of affected people. Regarding response on the ground, the ceasefire between 22 May to 3 June allowed delivery of humanitarian assistance to Khartoum and Darfur. The communication line established with the parties to the conflict has continued beyond the ceasefire, and advocacy continues on ensuring humanitarian access to the affected population. The HCT is also focusing on scaling up response in Darfur State where significant protection concerns remain including alarming levels of conflict-related sexual violence. Road access to Darfur State remains dangerous due to the presence of armed actors, and partners are exploring cross-border access from neighbouring countries. However, the Government of Sudan has not given official consent which recognizes Port of Sudan as the only entry point. Partners are scaling up their response, which now consists of 68 actors across 18 States.
5. The floor was opened for updates from clusters. Ms. Jennifer Chase (GBV AoR) noted that a new GBV Working Group has been set up in Al Jazirah State, and another Working Group will be established in Port Sudan. She highlighted the dire health situation overall, with people dying due to lack of food, medicine and water, and hospitals lacking healthcare workers which was impacting vulnerable people with pre-existing conditions in particular. Ms. Nancy Polutan-Teulieres (GPC) noted that the violence in Khartoum town has

demonstrated the failure of the parties to adhere to IHL. She flagged issues around the arbitrary denial of access to humanitarian assistance, increase in the deprivation of access to medical care, food and water. Mr. Brett Moore (GCM) noted that USD 5.2 million worth of NFI kits were due to arrive in June. A new camp will host 40,000 people, and partners are putting in place flood mitigation measures in six camps. Ms. Mailin Fauchon (GLC) encouraged partners to send supplies directly to Port Sudan wherever possible to be ready for shipment when conditions permit. A staging area has been set up in Jedda as a back-up to Port Sudan. GLC is monitoring the border crossings for possible openings as well as the customs situation. Work is ongoing with the Access Working Group to facilitate convoys to reach the Southwest. Mr. Dher Al-Hayo (CCCM) noted that IDPs had set up 64 informal camps, while 40 were deserted and some looted. CCCM was scaling up its activities, and it may come back with a request for formal activation of the cluster. Ms. Getachew shared that an additional 24-hour ceasefire has been agreed upon starting 10 June, which will facilitate humanitarian access. She asked global clusters to emphasize the need for immediate pre-positioning ahead of the rainy season.

6. **Haiti:** Ms. Skuric noted that cluster activation letters had been shared with the GCCG. Planning is ongoing for a GCCG mission to Haiti, and the GCCG secretariat will reach out to GCCs who were organizing missions separately to avoid any duplication.

Briefing on Operational Peer Review (OPR) in Ukraine

7. Ms. Skuric invited Mr. Stephen O'Malley from the Peer-2-Peer Project to brief on the outcomes of the Operational Peer Review (OPR) in Ukraine. Mr. O'Malley provided context to the OPR, noting that the review had been conducted a year after the scale-up had been declared in February 2022, even though typically OPRs follow five months after scale-up declaration. The reasons were partly due to leadership change in August 2022, the RC/HC's priority on winterization, and considerations around the timing of an Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation. The mission was led by Kevin Kennedy and team members included Christel Bultman from Save the Children, Jeremy Wellard from ICVA, Thomas Thompson from WFP, and Grainne O'Hara from UNHCR.
8. Mr. O'Malley outlined the key findings of the OPR:
 - a. There was a need to find ways to put the government in the driver's seat without displacing national actors, especially given the entry of many new actors from development, human rights organizations and communities. This presented challenges in how to work effectively with such actors. Furthermore, the humanitarian architecture needed to be adapted to a more area-based coordination model in line with the government structures.
 - b. It was clear that not all clusters needed to continue to be activated, and the mission advised the HCT to discuss with each cluster their added value through a review. The mission also emphasized that the clusters who continue will need to be resourced properly.
 - c. While the size of the scale-up on cash was impressive, the new coordination model through the Cash Working Group (CWG) was leading to a lot of dissatisfaction from the UN and NGOs. The mission recommended a global lesson learnt exercise on the new cash coordination model.
 - d. A strong role of civil society organizations in the Ukraine response raised important questions on application of humanitarian principles particularly on impartiality and independence. While there was no simple solution, the mission recommended holding open and honest discussions within individual organizations including with Ukrainian staff, as well as conducting a review of the Centrality of Protection strategy within clusters given the complexity and sensitivities of protection in the response.
9. The floor was opened for discussion. Ms. Marie-Helene Kyprianou (GFSC) asked for any observations from the mission on areas that the GFSC could be doing better as a cluster. She noted that the GFSC mission to Ukraine in May had referred to the risk of duplication of work between CWG and the GFSC. One recommendation was to strengthen the planning and coordination between CWG and the clusters. Mr. O'Malley shared his observation that the issues on cash coordination at the global level were being refracted down to Kyiv level.
10. Ms. Randa Hassan (GCCG secretariat) noted from her surge experience to Ukraine that the strong role of the government made Ukraine a unique context, and except for the response in the East, the role of the

international humanitarian actors was not clear. She asked for lessons learnt for the system and implications for future response in similar contexts. Mr. O'Malley said that the mission was struck by the way the response had shifted, and the strong focus on frontline areas remained important. Difficult questions needed to be answered on the role of international actors in areas with needs and IDPs which were not on the frontline. Mr. Dher Al-Hayo (CCCM) noted the importance of adapting and changing the response to a specific context, and asked to which extent CLAs, donors and other actors played a role when clusters were not performing. Mr. O'Malley responded that systemic issues such as coordination architecture and inconsistent support from CLAs influenced the performance of clusters. The wider issue was the misfit of a given cluster system in a context with strong government response.

11. Mr. Brett Moore (GSC) shared his observations that clusters initially faced difficulties in adopting a sophisticated operating model that would meet the level of development of Ukraine, whilst facing language barriers; and in understanding the differences between the regular cluster work and what was required on the ground. For winterization response, understanding the complexities of national gas and electricity grids and the technical capacities that were required to support the government also presented challenges. Mr. Nisar Syed (on behalf of UNICEF-led clusters) thanked the mission for bringing out coordination issues in the OPR report, and asked to ensure global clusters are engaged when developing the HCT plan as a follow up to the OPR. Mr. O'Malley suggested a follow-up conversation on lessons learnt from Ukraine and implications for the future for humanitarian response in a high-capacity country.

Action points

- i. GCCG secretariat: Organize a follow up discussion with Mr. Steve O'Malley on lessons learnt from Ukraine and implications for future humanitarian response in a high-capacity country.*

Transition in Libya and other settings

12. Ms. Skuric welcomed Ms. Kate Holland, a UNICEF consultant, to brief on transition guidance being developed by UNICEF. Mr. Nisar Syed provided a background to the topic, noting that one of the findings from the evaluation of UNICEF's role as CLA (CLARE II) was the need to update guidance on transition for country offices, and he sought engagement from the clusters on this guidance. Ms. Holland noted that CLARE II had been commissioned in 2020, and its final report was issued in January 2022. The work on transition guidance involves three steps: i) a desk review (nearly complete); ii) key informant interviews (June); and iii) case studies, with the final report due by mid-October. Previous cluster transitions and the corresponding guidance will be taken into account. In terms of the scope of work, it will provide practical guidance for country-level UNICEF offices and co-led clusters, build on existing IASC guidance and UNICEF policies, and it also has potential to inform inter-agency discussions. The guidance will consist of three components: i) decision-making to deactivate; ii) process of planning a transition; and iii) follow-on coordination structures. Thematic areas such as preparedness, localisation, accountability, and participation will be reflected. Key informant interviews will explore topics such as lessons learned from previous contexts, interagency work, CLA role and accountability.
13. The floor was opened for questions. Ms. Hassan (GCCG secretariat) said that one of the challenges related to transition or deactivation of clusters was in implementing the annual review of the coordination architecture, as per IASC guidance, as well as unwillingness from CLAs to transition for various reasons. Ms. Hassan asked how these challenges would be addressed in the development of a guidance, and what the reasons were for CLAs' reluctance to transition. Ms. Linda Doull (GHC) commented that the decision regarding deactivation or transition was not made by CLAs alone as HCTs were also involved. Ms. Doull asked how this collective decision-making would be reflected in the research. GCCs also asked for guidance that could benefit all clusters. Mr. Al-Hayo (CCCM) mentioned that UNHCR was in the process of mapping out the annual cluster review completion across its clusters with an aim to improve the transition process in the future. Mr. Brett Moore (GSC) noted that the functionality of clusters during the transition process relied on not only human resources, financial support, and technical expertise but also on the political will of CLAs to engage with the government. Ms. Skuric echoed the need to improve guidance on benchmarks and criteria for deactivation and transition, and supported the proposal to ensure that outcomes were relevant to all clusters. There was general agreement among GCCs on the suggested approach, with one GCC enquiring on the exact process for guidance that might have relevance for other clusters and whether there was an intention to take this to the OPAG.
14. Ms. Holland responded by noting that while the guidance was initially intended primarily for UNICEF, there was willingness to explore how it could apply more broadly to clusters. Mr. Syed agreed with the suggested

proposal to ensure that solutions were applicable to all clusters. Ms. Holland said she would continue to engage the GCCG throughout the entire process.

15. Ms. Monica Ramos (GWC) informed that UNICEF has been actively involved in supporting sectoral coordination teams in Libya and Iraq, and field colleagues received requests to train their national counterparts on coordination. Ms. Ramos inquired if other clusters have received similar requests and proposed a joint approach within the GCCG. A poll was conducted to identify training needs received by other clusters, but no positive responses were received. Ms. Skuric suggested that GCCs reach out to their counterparts in Libya and Iraq to enquire if requests had come from their national counterparts. Ms. Ramos agreed to follow up and gather relevant information.

Action points

- ii. *GCCs, with GWC in the lead: Reach out to field colleagues in Libya and Iraq to ask whether there have been any coordination training requests from government, for a joint up approach through the GCCG.*
- iii. *UNICEF consultant to consult further with GCCs to ensure relevance for other clusters.*

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16. On coordination mapping exercise, Ms. Hassan said that once the remaining responses come through, data cleaning and analysis will begin. Results will then be made available to clusters, including through a briefing session. She thanked the IMOs who provided support.
17. Ms. Skuric noted that the next regular GCCG meeting will be held on 19 July from 14:00 to 16:00 (Geneva time). Suggested agenda items include: follow up on action points and updates; operational updates; outcomes and follow up from GCCG mid-year retreat; Haiti: Global clusters/GCCG mission; OPR in Somalia; presentation on NEAT.
18. Ms. Wan Sophonpanich (CCCM) reminded the GCCs about an ongoing survey regarding cluster preparedness activities. She informed that the results of this survey would be shared during the mid-year retreat and asked GCCs to complete it at their earliest convenience.

Action points

- iv. *GCCG secretariat: Organize a briefing session on the results of coordination mapping exercise.*