Background

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Strategy for 2012-14 proposes to strengthen the Help Desk function and Rapid Response capacities. These functions represent two of the most concrete ways of achieving the GPC strategic object of “increased support to the field.” A review was conducted of current experience with Help Desks and Rapid Reaction capacity and the main findings are highlighted below.

### Help Desk
- All four AoRs have - or will have in 2012 - Help Desks
- Purpose is to facilitate field access to specialist expertise
- Experts are drawn from and vetted by existing members of the AoR
- Issues addressed are quite technical and specific to AoR; there may be some issues not covered by AoRs
- Requests must be channeled through field coordination mechanisms; no individual requests
- Help Desks are primarily accessed via AoR websites
- Links between AoRs and between AoRs and the Global Protection Cluster can be strengthened
- No clear link to rapid response function

### Rapid Reaction Capacity
- All four AoRs have - or plan to have in 2012 - enhanced rapid reaction capacity
- Purpose is to deploy experts within 72 hours based on a coordinated request from the field
- Deployments serve a common AoR purpose; cannot serve an Agency-specific agenda
- Deployment activities include: assessment, coordination, training, advocacy, resource mobilization
- Duration is up to 3 months
- Mentoring provided by AoR Lead and/or members
- Some AoRs have in-house deployment capacity through stand-by agreements; others have partnerships with existing rosters (GenCap, ProCap, NorCap, etc.)

Regarding the Help Desk, the emerging opinion was that all AoRs should establish and operate Help Desks that would be linked to each other and to the broader GPC home-page. Draft Terms of Reference were developed for the Help Desk, but were not finalized (see Annex 1).

Regarding the Rapid Reaction capacity, there was a general preference to strengthen existing rosters, recognizing, however, that there may be gaps in specific technical areas. A more detailed mapping of existing rosters was initiated, but could not be completed.
Agenda for the GPC Retreat Session

1. Referring to the attached Terms of Reference, clarify expectations regarding the Help Desk:
   • What kind of “Help” is required in the field – issues, skills, etc.?
   • What kind of “Help” is not required?
   • How should the Help Desk function in order to be useful?
   • How should the Help Desk be linked to Rapid Reaction capacity?

2. Regarding the Rapid Deployment capacity, clarify:
   • What kind of expertise is most in demand in the field?
   • Are there any gaps in currently available expertise?
   • How can the deployment process be improved?

3. What should be included in a work plan for these two deliverables in 2012?
Annex 1:  
Terms of Reference for GPC Help Desk Experts

Draft 9 February 2012 (abridged)

At the Global Protection Cluster Visioning Meeting in November 2011, it was agreed to establish a Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Help Desk to be available to provide advice to field protection colleagues in specialist areas. The Help Desk will take the form of a panel of experts selected from among the GPC membership who have volunteered to be available for this task.

The list of experts contained in the Help Desk will be made available on the GPC website. The Help Desk will consider requests from protection coordination mechanisms in the field only and only through an agreed focal point, such as the Coordinator or co-chair of the protection cluster or any sub-clusters that may exist.

The specific tasks of the experts are outlined below:

• The experts can be any member of the Global Protection Cluster who has expertise in a particular area that they feel can be made available to other members at large. Experts can be based at the global or field level.

• Experts offering their availability for the Help Desk will be submitted to the full GPC membership for approval by non-objection.

• Experts must be willing to be on standby to respond to requests for advice from the field. Requests can be submitted directly to the expert or be channelled to him/her through the GPC Support Cell.

• Experts are required to maintain a tracking system of requests sent to them and the answers they provide. When relevant and agreed to by both the expert and the person submitting a request for advice, the question and answer can be published in the GPC Newsletter for wider dissemination.

• Experts should be prepared to provide brief updates on his/her activities to the Global Protection Cluster on a 6 month basis.

• Experts sign up for a yearly term and can be renewed annually subject to their agreement.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of possible areas of specialization that experts could volunteer to cover. Experts may cover all or part of any of the areas below or additional areas or sub-areas not listed:

• **Life, physical security and integrity**, including but not limited to: IHL; mines and UXOs; threats to life, extra-judicial killings and disappearances; torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment; gender-based violence; generalized violence

• **Displacement and freedom of movement**, including but not limited to: forced displacement; coerced return or relocation; restrictions to movement.
• **Family life**, including but not limited to: Unaccompanied and separated children; family separation.

• **Liberty**, including but not limited to: arbitrary arrest or detention; abduction; trafficking; forced recruitment.

• **Access to basic needs and essential services**, including but not limited to: denial, obstruction of or unequal/discriminatory access to adequate food, water or sanitation, shelter, health care or education; denied or obstructed access to civilians; registration and profiling systems

• **Individual documentation**, civil status, and information, including but not limited to: current status of personal identity documentation.

• **Land and property**, including but not limited to: status of land and housing titles; illegal confiscation, occupation or destruction of property; forced evictions

Areas covered by GPC AORs (mine action, child protection, gender-based violence, housing, land and property) will be coordinated through the AOR Coordinators and will follow established procedures individual AORs have agreed on.