



GPC HLP AoR Meeting, Wednesday, 15 July

Present: GPC Coordinator, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, OHCHR, Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Global Shelter Cluster, GPC Support Cell, IFRC, NRC, IOM

1 –Coordination mechanism on Housing, Land, Property at the global level

HLP has been an Area of Responsibility within the GPC since 2007, and it is of crucial importance for several reasons:

- Requests continue to come from the field and they need to be answered/supported;
- In the long-term, more guidance on HLP is needed, as well as a pool of experts who can be deployed to assist with analysis, the development of strategies, etc.;
- A minimum of coordination is necessary at the global level to identify what is already existing and what is needed;
- Donors still need to be convinced of the relevance of HLP work (example of ECHO refusing to fund HLP).

2 – Current situation in regards to the HLP AoR and interest from partners for a new entity to be created

The AoR has not been adequately functioning for at least the last year. UN-Habitat has been overstretched, and the coordination and leadership of the AoR has been dormant. UN-Habitat is in favour of reforming the AoR, and expressed their current lack of capacity for leading the group at this time, while confirming their interest to remain engaged.

All other partners present expressed their commitment to strengthening HLP work and their willingness to engage in a new coordination mechanism at the global level: NRC, through their engagement in the field (the ICLA program is rolled out in more than 20 countries, and they chair a large majority of the existing HLP sub-clusters); OHCHR, both through the mandate and their collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing; IOM, which is actively involved in advocacy efforts to raise awareness on land issues with DPKO and DPA; and IFRC through their support to National Societies in operations and shelter practitioners as co-lead of the Global Shelter Cluster. The importance of HLP and Regulatory Barriers for the RCRC Movement was highlighted in November 2011, at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent which included all state parties to the Geneva Conventions where a Resolution was adopted¹. UNHCR as well, which is strongly interested in taking HLP issues even further than emergency contexts. UNHCR noted that it planned to tackle the root causes of displacement, in line with their High Commissioner's 2015 HC Dialogue. In order to be more predictable, the agency is working on developing guidance on HLP for its staff, so that it is better equipped to respond in the field. UNHCR also works on advocacy at the global level through its leadership role of three clusters (Protection, CCCM, and Shelter).

¹ By which the states with support from their National Societies, the IFRC and partner agencies, were encouraged to review and address such barriers. Additionally the Resolution *affirmed* the importance of finding practical solutions (both formal and informal) for quickly addressing regulatory barriers related to the provision of emergency and transitional shelter after disasters; and *called* on states, the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and relevant humanitarian organizations to make every effort to assure equitable shelter assistance as between all persons in need, including as between those who possess formal legal title to land or real property and those who do not, as well as between women and men.



The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC), led by IFRC and UNHCR, already has strong linkages to HLP task forces in the field. At the global level, GSC had established a Working Group in 2013 on regulatory barriers including HLP and beneficiary selection. The GSC Working Group co-led by IFRC and NRC had been filling the vacuum left by the lack of support from the HLP AoR; however, it is no longer active and the GSC is looking forward to engage with the new group, which should consider both situations of conflict as well as natural disaster.

The Global Protection Cluster Coordinator offered the support of the GPC Support Cell to work closely with the new group and organize events like donor briefings to support fundraising efforts.

3 – Suggestions regarding structure and content of the new entity

It was noted that NRC, IFRC and IOM all individually expressed an interest in co-chairing/co-leading the HLP AoR going forward. Additionally there was a general consensus amongst participants that the work of the HLP AoR should be field focused with support to operations.

Structure

- Three possible options are on the table, from a new formal AoR to a community of practice, to something in the middle (with less leadership than the AoR but with a minimum commitment from the various actors).
- Strong links need to be preserved between the Global Protection Cluster and the Global Shelter Cluster.
- NRC emphasized the need to have a permanent structure that partners can rely on for policy development, advocacy efforts and field support, and thus expressed their preference for a formal AoR.
- The issue of capacity needs to be addressed from the very beginning, in order to avoid raising expectations, to set up realistic objectives, and to define the structure and leadership of the new entity accordingly. The issue of capacity for deployments of experts to the field is especially important (e.g. it was mentioned that the NORCAP roster exists, but needs to be reinforced).

Content

- The spectrum of issues to cover ranges from preparedness to emergency response and solutions.
- Different actors need to be involved, including NGOs and UN agencies. It is also important to bring other actors which are less traditional in the humanitarian sphere but which bring expertise and experience on HLP (World Bank, for example) to the group.
- Advocacy is of crucial importance as well and will need to be undertaken at both global and field level to raise the importance of HLP issues, facilitate fundraising and improve understanding on HLP by HCTs. It was mentioned that the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing can be a strong ally for advocacy efforts.
- Building capacity for staff in the field is also necessary, including on how to include HLP in an overall analysis from the start of a response to a crisis, reach out to development actors, and include the government as soon as possible.

Action points

- IFRC and NRC to jointly organize the next meeting. Invitation will be sent by IFRC. UNHCR, the GPC and the Global Shelter Cluster stand ready to provide support as necessary. Structure and modalities of the new entity to be discussed at the next meeting.