

# GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER | STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2016-19

## CONSULTATIONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

### ICVA, BANGKOK, 23 OCTOBER 2015

1. The Senior Protection Coordinator attended a meeting of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies in the Asia-Pacific region, bringing together 22 national and international NGO network coordinators from 17 countries, including Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand as well as the Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network (representing 250 CSOs, from Iran to East and North Asia) and the Asia Disaster Risk Reduction and Response Network (a network based in 22 countries).
2. Asia –Pacific region is somewhat unique in its focus on crisis related to natural disasters, the make-up of most of the region of middle-income countries, the presence of a strong civil society with connexions to the private sector, but also in the lack of adherence to international standards or the development of regional standards.
3. Given this background the question of meaningful localisation comes to the fore. How can the strong local response to disasters be recognised, while at the same time ensuring the promotion of and adherence to international standards on human rights protection in disasters?
4. It was suggested that the vision of the GPC is not clear. At the field level the articulation of protection concerns and objectives is not always very good and it would be helpful for the GPC to assist in defining at the field level what those should be.
5. The WoSR does not take into account the Asian context. How will the strategic framework take into account the reality of Asia? The approach to protection could be entirely different from other regions, because of the presence of humanity. Contextualisation is important. But when we talk about localisation, how can we do that in a region with no common standards on protection or human rights?
6. Area-based programming is a suitable approach to the displaced in Asia because of general gaps in protection and poverty.
7. There is a general divergence of Asian standards from international standards. Should the GPC prioritise certain issues over others? A prioritisation would not be welcome operationally as it may exclude some operational actors from seeking the assistance of the GPC.
8. More guidance on protection is not needed but access to the guidance is needed through translation and dissemination. How can national

legislation be understood in relation to international standards in countries where disasters occur?

9. The GPC should have a space on-line for feedback and consultation. The GPC could also do more coaching and mentoring of field clusters and donors, e.g. in assisting JICA or Japan development agencies to build the element of protection in their funding policies. The GPC could pressure countries more in their funding policy. The GPC could also play a role in building the capacity of national disaster management agencies, e.g. the Pakistan disaster agency applies SPHERE standards. Working with national human rights commissions is an interesting way to look at protection in humanitarian action, e.g. in Pakistan, Afghanistan.
10. The GPC should identify national champions on protection, for example national human rights commissions but also identify donors who can be worked with to include protection as a priority in funding decisions.
11. The coherence of the protection cluster was questioned with various sub-clusters and even talk of a new child protection cluster being created. The GPC was urged to ensure protection maintains coherence.

## Conclusions

12. There was a clear consensus about the need to interpret international standards for an Asian context, including by adapting and explaining existing guidance but also by mentoring field clusters, identifying national champions on protection and working with donors on protection policies and funding.
13. The need for the GPC to adapt its working methods to take into account the role of social media, which is used to foment revolution or guide refugees across Europe, is an urgent task. Social media would assist the GPC to convey its messages on protection.