

2011 Flooding in Pakistan– Lessons learned & Recommendations / Protection Cluster

Key recommendations (further detailed below)

- a) The **HC/HCT** should provide an unequivocal and continuous support in asserting the life-saving nature of several protection activities as well as in the activation of the Protection Cluster from the very onset of the emergency.
- b) The ongoing dialogue of the **HC(T)** with the Government in preparedness and response for 2012 should already take into consideration protection as a key component of the response mechanism, capitalizing on the final endorsement by the Government of the protection cluster in 2011.
- c) The **involvement of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC)** remains critical in mobilizing – if needed – high-level support for the activation of the cluster.
- d) There is a need for a unanimous, **simultaneous and unequivocal consensus by cluster lead agencies' HQs** on involvement in the protection coordination lead.
- e) Flooding/natural disasters in Pakistan should be taken into account as a recurrent factor that may trigger a humanitarian response through the cluster approach. The natural disaster dimension currently coexists with the ongoing insecurity/complex emergency in KP/FATA region. **If committing (or continuing to commit) to lead the clusters/sub-clusters in the flood response, lead agency respective HQs need to back up the decision** by adequate coordination resources at both central (Islamabad) but especially at province level, irrespective of the decision on resources to invest bilaterally/agency-wise in projects in the flood-affected area.
- f) **Partnership with the Government** counterparts (NDMA) remains important during all phases of the emergency response to build acceptance of and support to protection-related activities. Direct and constant communication with NDMA and the selected focal points is critical. Advocacy with the Government to avoid high turnover in cluster counterparts/focal points is needed, at all levels.
- g) As the 2011 flood response showed, the **role of the Provincial governmental authorities** (PDMA and Social Welfare) remains crucial in supporting protection activities and a constant dialogue should be maintained.
- h) The RPAs in both 2010 and 2011 have highlighted the **relevance of specific protection needs** and gaps during the emergency that cannot be always mainstreamed into the work of other clusters. The HCT should agree on the role and place of protection in emergency response well before the onset of the emergency.
- i) **Decision on activated clusters should be simultaneous.** Asymmetrical activation of clusters is detrimental to the prompt carrying out of joint assessments and to resource mobilization.
- j) **Protection assessments** should be undertaken from the start of the emergency as part of a coordinated effort in which the protection cluster participates. Given the potential sensitivity of protection issues, **preparation is key**, especially with the Government at both national and provincial level (explanation of methodology, sampling, etc).
- k) Once protection is recognized as a life-saving activity and the cluster has been launched, it should receive **adequate funding allocation**. Predictability in the budget allocation criteria of the appeal should be sought from the onset of the emergency, as exclusion of projects may undermine participation in reporting and coordination.
- l) As recently highlighted by donors, a **revised humanitarian appeal** may be more conducive to tap into donor humanitarian sources and may assure better funding coverage.
- m) While part of joint **donor meetings**, the protection cluster should organize separate donor briefings, where specific and complex protection issues and challenges may be explained more at length.
- n) **Donor visits** remain an excellent opportunity for sensitization, resource mobilization, performance monitoring and accountability.

A. Leadership

1. HCT role

- 1.1. The HCT should provide an unequivocal and continuous support in asserting the life-saving nature of several protection activities as well as in the activation of the Protection Cluster from the very onset of the crisis. The HCT is crucial in defending the agreed position in case of Government's opposition. As a last resort, this support should be also promptly voiced by the HC/HCT to the ERC (with the support of the Global Protection Cluster).
- 1.2. More advocacy to be done by the protection clusters' leads with the HC(I) to reach a consensus on the life-saving nature of protection activities, building on existing humanitarian Guidelines and practice (ref. "*CERF Life Saving Criteria*", January 2010; "*Application of the CERF Life-Saving Guidelines*", September 2011).
- 1.3. Given the likely recurrence of natural disasters in Pakistan, the ongoing dialogue of the HC(I) with the Government in preparedness and response for 2012 should already take into consideration protection as a key component of the response mechanism, capitalizing on the Government final endorsement of the protection cluster in 2011.

2. HQ support and involvement

- 2.1. The involvement of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) remains critical in mobilizing – if needed – high-level support for the activation of the cluster, including through channels to the ERC.
- 2.2. Flooding/natural disasters in Pakistan triggering a humanitarian response through the cluster approach should be taken into account as a recurrent factor. This dimension currently coexists with the ongoing insecurity/complex emergency dimension in KP/FATA region. If committing (or continuing to commit) to lead the clusters/sub-clusters in the flood response, protection cluster leads/ sub-cluster leads (CL/SCL) should commit to expectations and requirements as CL/SCL coordinator. The respective HQs need to back up the decision by adequate coordination resources to guarantee coverage at both central (Islamabad) but especially at province level, irrespective of the decision on the resources to invest bilaterally in projects (as an agency).
- 2.3. There is a need for a unanimous, simultaneous and unequivocal consensus by cluster lead agencies' HQs on a) whether to support the activation of the protection cluster in the event of a new flood in Pakistan; and b) which agency should take the lead role in protection coordination, including in the field, (considering also the contextual presence of conflict-induced displacement in KP/FATA). It would be important that any decision/confirmation of coordination commitment be signaled already in advance, before the emergency strikes.
- 2.4. As preparedness is a key stage in the response to natural disasters, CL/SCL should reflect on the implication of reducing their presence in the field as soon as the emergency relief phase is over. Many longer-term protection gaps which become critical in affecting the response (e.g. documentation, land & property issues, and capacity building of local authorities on protection) have an early recovery component. Continuity in the dialogue with the government is also essential, including in building capacity to ensure an exit strategy.

B. Partnerships [especially with Government]

1. Partnership with the Government counterparts (NDMA) remains important during all phases to build acceptance of and support to protection-related activities. Direct and constant communication with NDMA/PDMA is critical and should be cultivated through:
 - Dialogue, sensitization and advocacy to “demystify” protection (e.g. one-time presentation on Protection and on the Protection Cluster for the Chairman of NDMA scheduled for March 2012,)

- encouraging the maintenance of NDMA/PDMA focal points for the protection cluster from the “Gender and Child Cell” both at central and provincial level and advocate for continuity of staff

2. The role of the NDMA and PDMA as co-lead in the PC Working Groups and the participation in all other Sub-cluster WG is important to ensure liaison and facilitation in the dialogue with the government.
3. Consideration should be given by the protection cluster as of whether the “Child and Gender cell” adequately covers all the realm of emergency and early recovery protection issues (e.g. documentation, property rights) that have a clear impact during the relief efforts as well as in the return/durable solution processes.
4. The role of the Provincial governmental authorities (PDMA) remains crucial. The 2011 flood response showed that the support to protection activities provided by the Provincial authorities was critical in eventually endorsing the findings of the Rapid Protection Assessments and sensitizing the Government/NDMA at central level on the importance of implementing dedicated protection activities, aside mainstreaming protection in the work of other clusters (which remain essential).

C. Coordination structure & mechanism

1. ICCM

- 1.1. Inter-cluster coordination remains essential to adequately mainstream protection in the work of the other clusters. The ICCM is a key mechanism in this respect.
- 1.2. Through the presence of the Government (NDMA/PDMA), the ICCM should remain the main discussion forum on the overall emergency response, also to avoid the proliferation of cumbersome bilateral reporting mechanisms between clusters-NDMA.
- 1.3. At Provincial level, the added value of the ICCM is also recognized. However, the availability of predictable and stable human resources in overall coordination was identified as a gap.

2. District level

- 2.1. The role of protection Working Groups/ fora and other sub-cluster fora/referral mechanisms (e.g. CP and SGBV) at District level, largely convened by national authorities (e.g. Ministry for Social Welfare), needs to receive adequate support and be monitored from the provincial level.
- 2.2. Contingency planning for 2011 was more focused on capacitating 2010 flood affected areas. 2011 floods came as a result of rains thus most of the affected districts were completely new and had not been involved in the contingency planning. Wider coverage of contingency planning exercises may need to be ensured.

D. Clusters [activation; roll out; permanency →refer also to the comments under LEADERSHIP]

- 1.1. The RPAs in both 2010 and 2011 have highlighted the relevance of specific protection needs and gaps during the emergency that cannot be always mainstreamed into the work of other clusters (e.g. documentation and legal advice, family tracing and reunification, GBV, dedicated monitoring to identify the most vulnerable segments in the community at risk of exclusion). With these elements, the HCT should agree on the role and place of protection in emergency response well before the onset of the emergency and as part of the preparedness phase.

- 1.2. Asymmetrical activation of clusters is detrimental to the prompt carrying out of joint assessment and to resource mobilization. Considering the likely recurrence of natural disasters in Pakistan, protection should become a cluster regularly activated.

E. Assessments

- 1.1. Based on the approval of the RPA form and related SOPs by the NDMA assessment committee in August 2011, Protection elements should be part of initial Rapid Needs Assessments. Clarity from the onset should facilitate the prompt mobilization of the resources at provincial level (training/sensitization activities including for authorities; presence and refresher training of enumerators etc.).
- 1.2. The systematic inclusion of the protection cluster in the coordination structure responsible for organizing the RA, as well as future Joint Assessments, would add predictability in the work plan of the cluster/ sub-clusters and would ensure adequate support to protection from the Assessment Survey Committee in terms of human and material resources, logistics and security arrangements.
- 1.3. In line with standard practices in natural disasters¹, the presence of the Government throughout the preparation and the conduction of the RA and the MNA may be useful to avoid criticism on methodologies and approaches (e.g. questions on perceived security/insecurity etc.) leading to denial of findings in the aftermath of the assessment or request to “sugar coat” the protection findings. This should be balanced with the fact that the presence of the Government may discourage the provision of reliable information on sensitive protection issues by the consulted population.
- 1.4. At provincial level, a better consultation needs to take place with cluster partners and especially with the Government before the issuing of the assessment results.
- 1.5. The HC/HCT should support the protection cluster in the dialogue with the Government on the assessment findings, especially on the identified protection gaps (i.e. exclusion, discrimination, other human rights violations).
- 1.6. The protection cluster should ensure preparedness by maintaining the rosters in the field to be able to quickly mobilize already trained human resources.
- 1.7. Adequate gender balance in the assessment teams should be ensured and promoted with the other clusters.
- 1.8. IMO should be regarded as a critical resource for the protection cluster/ sub-clusters, especially considering the inherent complexity of protection assessments and indicators. Needs assessment expert dedicated to the cluster may need to be mobilized also using existing support resources (e.g. CASPAR).
- 1.9. Dedicated/thematic protection monitoring and assessments should be repeated during the course of the year.
- 1.10. Based on the concrete results of the child-protection sub-cluster, the protection cluster as a whole should improve its strength to report against indicators, in order to validate the quantitative aspects of its work, which are often objected (“protection by numbers”).

F. Communication

¹ Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises

- 1.1. External communication to other cluster and other external audience is a key component of cluster coordination. Ensuring adequate and up-to-date cluster information (cluster-dedicated web-pages and publications/bulletins) must become a standard for the protection cluster as a whole (Child protection sub-cluster model)
- 1.2. The cluster structure should be adequately reflected on the “Pakresponse” website.

G. Resource mobilization

- 1.1. The inactivation of the cluster excluded protection from the Flash appeal, marginalized protection from the onset and had a substantial impact on the resource mobilization in the first phases of the 2011 emergency. This should be avoided by a prompt activation of the cluster.
- 1.2. The overall share of protection-dedicated resources in the 2011 Revised Appeal remains minimal and was decreased further from the 2010 Revised Appeal in terms of budget allocation and projects (from 3% to 2.5% approximately). Once protection is recognized as a life-saving activity and the cluster has been launched, it should not be undermined by neglect in funding allocation.
- 1.3. The number of protection projects submitted after the 2011 flood response was further reduced since the allocation for protection was further decreased when budgetary allocation were revised. As project screening and vetting is a cumbersome process, more predictability should be sought in defining the budget allocation criteria of the appeal.
- 1.4. Inclusion of projects in the appeal is a good tool to encourage reporting, qualitative, quantitative and financial. Exclusion – including due to budgetary reductions – can negatively affect participation of protection actors in coordination structure and reporting.
- 1.5. The issuing of a revised appeal is preferable. Projects geared towards early-recovery may be labeled (e.g. in the protection cluster projects on land/housing and property rights). As recently highlighted by donors, a revised humanitarian appeal would facilitate the tapping into donor humanitarian sources.
- 1.6. The protection cluster should be part of joint donor meetings and be prepared to present agreed highlights from all components of the cluster. In addition, given the complexity of protection and especially if specific advocacy efforts are needed, the protection cluster should organize separate donor briefings, where protection issues may be explained more at length.
- 1.7. Donor visits remain an excellent opportunity for sensitization, resource mobilization, performance monitoring and accountability. The protection cluster should be adequately represented during donor visits (e.g. donors should have meetings with the ICCM in the field). Projects implemented by protection-cluster members should be actively included in the visit itinerary.

END

Protection Cluster Pakistan, 6 March 2012