

PACIFIC HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION CLUSTER (PHPC) SUPPORT TEAM¹

Terms of Reference (TOR) October 2017

I. Background

Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are amongst the most vulnerable states in the world to natural hazards including cyclones, volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts, tsunamis, and earthquakes, as well as the impacts of climate change. To prepare for, respond to and recover from the Pacific region's high vulnerability to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change, the UN Country Teams in Fiji and Samoa established the regional Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) in 2008. The PHT is the agreed collaborative coordination mechanism among all the major humanitarian actors in the region, and covers the following 14 countries: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Under the regional PHT², a cluster support system has been established including nine (9) clusters³, which are regional in scope and exist on a 'permanent standby' basis. This enables the PHT clusters to engage in ongoing awareness-raising, capacity-strengthening, and provision of technical guidance and support to regional and national-level humanitarian actors for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Several Pacific countries have also established their own national clusters or working groups that are responsible for coordinating disaster preparedness, response and recovery (in their sector). The PHPC fully recognises and supports these national structures as the primary function of the regional cluster support teams is to support national clusters or sectoral working groups where they exist. Where they do not, the cluster support teams are still able to provide coordination and technical support related to their sector, as needed and under national leadership.

II. Scope of PHPC

The Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster (PHPC) support team seeks to enhance regional and national capacity for gender and protection-sensitive disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in Pacific Island countries. The PHPC is regional in coverage and meets on an on-going basis.

The PHPC uses the IASC definition of protection, "all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee laws)," and adheres to the Sphere Protection Principles, the Protection Mainstreaming Principles and the Principles of Partnership.

Gender is fundamental to the scope of the PHPC, recognising the need to ensure advocacy and interventions consistently and substantively promote gender equality in humanitarian action.

Key focuses and priorities of the PHPC include:

- Child protection, given the negative impacts of disasters on children;

¹ The term "Cluster Support Teams" is used to help clarify the relationship between PHT regional clusters and Government-led national clusters, however they remain "Clusters" in their status as part of the IASC-endorsed global humanitarian architecture.

² For more information, refer to [The Pacific Humanitarian Team - from commitment to action \(2017\)](#)

³ The clusters include Health and Nutrition, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Food Security, Shelter, Education, Protection, Logistics, Early Recovery Network and Emergency Telecommunications.

- Gender-based violence prevention and response, given the high rates of violence in the Pacific, and the fact that violence tends to rise in the period after disasters;
- Inclusiveness of people living with a disability (PLWD); and
- Inclusiveness of diversity, including but not limited to people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recognising its limited resources, the PHPC focuses on five (5) priority countries – Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands – based on the recorded frequency of natural hazards, existing protection challenges that may be exacerbated in emergencies, and opportunity for the PHPC to positively impact gender and protection awareness and capacity among national humanitarian actors.

Countries beyond the priority countries will receive support from the PHPC on an ad hoc basis as determined by cluster support team members in consultation with relevant international, regional, and national stakeholders.

In the event of conflict involving a state actor, and given the presence of government-led clusters in the region, the PHPC would adjust its involvement in support of protection and gender equality in relation to the conflict in accordance with the international humanitarian principle of neutrality.

III. Goal and Objectives

Whilst recognising that the primary responsibility for the protection of persons affected by disasters rests with national governments, the PHPC aims to ensure gender equality and protection is central to humanitarian action and that preparedness and response in the Pacific region is timely, of high quality, and effective.

An overarching objective of the PHPC is to ensure each country has effective mechanisms for the integration and coordination of gender and protection in humanitarian action. This includes offering and providing support at national level or to countries for:

- Cluster positioning and establishment: for gender and protection clusters to be integrated within national disaster machineries; and for countries without clusters, supporting creation of strategically important and suitable gender and protection coordination mechanisms.
- Fundamental cluster or committee documents and processes: including terms of reference, standard operating procedures, strategies and work planning for preparedness, response and recovery, as well as tools and processes for assessment, analysis and reporting.
- Cluster leadership: including advice to cluster leads and co-leads on: techniques and strategies to effectively support coordination, inclusive cluster membership of relevant local stakeholders such as women's groups, cluster implementation of and compliance with appropriate standards on gender and protection in humanitarian action, input to routine and emergency-based coordination tasks, and advice on requesting surge support if required.
- Capacity strengthening: across the range of humanitarian actors including strengthening/building capacity of national-level actors to integrate gender and protection at national, sub-national and community levels.
- Targeted action and mainstreaming: technical inputs where requested to national gender and protection clusters engaged in targeted action, and for other clusters and actors such as NDMOs, government ministries, militaries etc. with a responsibility for mainstreaming gender and protection – while balancing the sensitivities of working with diverse actors.
- Information, communication and knowledge management and sharing: encouraging engagement between national clusters and also between regional clusters such as sharing tools and materials, good practices, research, and innovations in the region and beyond and promoting efficiency through synergies in areas such as information education and communication (IEC) materials.

Additionally, the PHPC works at the regional level on:

- Coordination and mainstreaming: participating in regional inter-cluster meetings and activities, and strengthening the capacity of other PHT clusters to better support national clusters in mainstreaming gender and protection as well as other cross-cutting areas such as accountability to affected populations in their individual technical areas for preparedness, response and recovery.
- Advocacy: mobilising international and donor support for the integration of gender and protection, including in relation to specific identified protection risks and challenges.
- Thought leadership: identifying areas for innovation, sharing research and recommendations on specific topics and issues of relevance in the Pacific context.

IV. Leadership and Coordination

The lead agency for the PHPC is elected by the PHPC and approved by the PHT. UN Women was elected to lead the PHPC in February 2016 (after the co-leads UNHCR and OHCHR withdrew from leadership), the leadership arrangement was approved by the PHT in April 2016.

Regular coordination meetings are facilitated by the lead agency of the PHPC as required, on a minimum of a quarterly basis. The frequency of meetings may change based on consensus of members and for example in advance of cyclone season or during an emergency in any part of the region.

Two (2) regional sub-clusters exist under the PHPC: the Child Protection Sub-cluster, led by UNICEF, and the GBViE sub-cluster, co-led by UN Women and UNFPA.⁴ Ad hoc working groups can be created when needed.

PHPC meetings may take the form of regular coordination meetings and/or of thematic meetings. Members may recommend topics and issues for discussion at meetings. Meeting agendas are circulated in advance by the lead agency. Members are welcome to put forward items for discussion.

The lead agency, with the support of the OCHA, shall coordinate meetings between the PHPC and other clusters for coordinating gender and protection mainstreaming activities.

V. Membership

PHPC cluster membership is open to UN agencies, regional organisations, and INGOs operating across the region. National-level actors are not included in the cluster, but could be included in the event that the regional cluster is mobilised to support a national emergency. International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) has member status and International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC) have observer status in the cluster.

Members are expected to: (i) attend meetings regularly, in person or by Skype; (ii) share information on their current and planned activities, including activities of their national counterparts in the region; (iii) contribute to cluster work including input to draft PHPC documents; iv) participate in relevant sub-clusters and working groups; and (v) make an earnest effort to collaborate in order to avoid gaps and overlaps in support for gender and protection action in PICs and to channel efforts and resources in accordance with respective member strengths and capacities.

⁴ The Child Protection Sub-cluster TOR is currently under development by UNICEF. The GBViE Sub-Cluster TOR is provided in Annex 2.

VI. Review

This TOR shall be reviewed annually, and revised as required.