# **Closing Remarks – Global Protection Forum 2021**

# **Climate Change Session**

William Chemaly, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator, 29 October 2021, 10:00 – 11:30 CET

Thank you Atle. Thank you for a brilliant facilitation.

Giving me the floor for closing remarks when the time is up, reflects the same sense of urgency I heard in the session. We need to act before the time is up. You graciously said it “we are slowly running out of time”. Maybe not so slow.

**This has been a fantastic discussion**. Many thanks to the organizers and panelists. (big shout out to Nancy and Nina for shaping and guiding it) I’ve really appreciated the mix of research, real world perspectives on protection efforts in communities impacted by climate crises and conflict, and the linking made to the forthcoming GPC Guidance Note on Preparedness for Protection in relation to climate change and disasters – it’s really been a rich dialogue.

**Special thanks** to Atle and Chelsea for the comprehensive stage setting and open hand for further partnerships, Nadia for bringing us to a clear complex context and direct link to child marriage and recruitments by armed groups, persons with disability and the elderly left behind, Abdunassir – Nash, for saying “we face disasters every day”, it is not unusual, it is not surprising and for sharing the strategies, Graham for introducing our guidance as a step to formalize our role and accountability as a cluster, and Meron for outlining the work of UNHCR.

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**There have been many important headlines today.**

I would like to pick on two by way of closure: **visibility and integration.**

**First**, **visibility.** While the challenge is massively visible today and (as said by Atle) 200-M-people-on-the-move-size visible for tomorrow, the protection challenge remains the invisibility at the individual level. People most affected remain most hidden, from services, information, preparedness,

**Second, integration.** Ultimately, when we’re thinking about protection risks, understanding what they are and what’s driving them, and thinking about how best to respond, integration is at the core. For the person who is being impacted by different risks, they are living a a normal life (we call it multi-dimensional life) and they simply don’t have the luxury of siloing their experience. And so we cannot silo our response.

Our protection assistance must seek to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation considerations in different contexts. The efforts of DRR actors must take into account how they can design interventions in ways that help prevent and respond to protection risks including displacement.

How conflict comes into this, and how conflict analysis and conflict sensitive thinking can be integrated into such climate and protection focused interventions is another critical dimension.

And the good news is no one needs to do this alone – this push for integration is a push for strategic partnerships, premised on local leadership and action.

**So what do we commit to today?**

We commit to remain a space for interagency initiatives, bridges and dialogue.

We also commit to make our response and contribution to the broader response in this area predictable and formalized, so we become accountable around 6 headlines:

* 1. Analysis & advocacy (big shout out for DRC and IRC for their fork on the Analysis Framework – I know Brennan and Kathrine are with us today)
	2. Awareness, info as aid and community engagement
	3. Preparedness and contingency planning with local actors and authorities
	4. Specialized responses -- We are ahead in GBV and CP, but we must do more in MHPSS, youth, housing land and property and negative coping mechanisms in general
	5. Social workers and communities support through community-based protection programmes
	6. Bridging and working with others

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In a broader sense, protection risks discriminate against people and hit some harder than others.

We cannot discriminate when it comes to the risks that we decide to respond to.

Climate is a core consideration and area of work.

We should be as accountable in climate response as conflict response, and we will make that clear in the next year.

Yes, we have to focus, adapt and do more.

But also we should have the courage to think different and evolve the cluster system to fit a world in a climate of change and much shaped by climate change.

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**Organizers:** Nancy Polutan-Teulieres (GPC ops cell), Meron Yared (UNHCR), Brennan Webert (DRC) and Nina Birkeland (NRC)

**Background:** Preventing and preparing for internal displacement during armed conflict is notoriously difficult. In comparison, the more predictable, cyclical or slow-onset nature or geographic location of many hazards, such as hurricane season, volcanic eruptions or droughts, means that much can be done to reduce the protection risks for all displaced persons and the risk of disaster displacement before events occur. Disaster risk reduction (DRR), preparedness, anticipatory action approaches, climate change adaptation and development measures that address the underlying causes of vulnerability and displacement can do much to mitigate and prevent disasters and with climate change increasing the severity and frequency of many events are becoming even more important.

While much work has been undertaken examining the relationship between climate change and displacement, further clarity remains on the protection risks resulting from displacement in the context of climate change, protection actor’s role in addressing protection risks related to climate change, and what needs to be done differently to effectively address protection risks related to climate change and forced displacement.

The GPC is committed to ensure that field protection clusters, AORs and partners are prioritizing all protection concerns to avoid protection gaps in the context of climate change and disasters that would negatively affect vulnerable communities through ensuring appropriate preparedness measures. This is further outlined in the GPC’s Strategic Framework 2020-2024 in which the GPC commits to meet the challenges to make protection actions contextually appropriate and complementary. This includes the importance of joint analysis to achieve effective and appropriate protection outcomes especially in situations where risks include a mixture of natural hazards exacerbated by climate change, conflict (and climate changes impact on violence and conflict) and security challenges including violent extremism.