



COVID-19 Global Protection Response GPC Support Options

I. BACKGROUND

COVID-19 pandemic created a global health and human rights crisis that requires a collective humanitarian response that goes beyond existing coordination platforms. In April 2020, The UN issued a COVID-19 **Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP)** aiming to fight the pandemic through a multi-partner multisectoral response plan. The GHRP is based on three priorities: Contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and decrease morbidity and mortality; Decrease the deterioration of human assets and rights, social cohesion and livelihoods; Protect, assist and advocate for refugees, internally displaced people, migrants and host communities particularly.

The GHRP is guided by humanitarian and protection principles so **the protection of the affected people is at the center of the humanitarian response**. To this end, the plan intends to prevent, mitigate and end all risks producing harm to the affected people. This requires a continuous analysis of the risks people face, and the commitment of all humanitarian actors to address those risks. It also implies incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity into the humanitarian response.

II. ROLE OF THE PROTECTION CLUSTER IN THE COVID19 RESPONSE

Within the context of the GHRP, the Global Protection Cluster aims to strengthen the protection sector in the field to respond to (i) protection and rights violations that may affect the effectiveness of the health response; (ii) protection issues triggered or exacerbated by COVID-19 and related measures; (ii) protection issues and human rights violations preceding the outbreak that persist and cannot be forgotten.

The GPC Response in countries where the Protection Cluster or Working Groups are active is outline in **the GPC COVID-19 Operational footprint**. In summary, the GPC response is focused on the following five pillars: Safe, dignified, and inclusive health response; Protection monitoring and analysis; Protection advocacy; Protection awareness raising activities and campaigns and; Protection service delivery.

For other operations in the GHRP, the GPC – including the Areas of Responsibility and other expert organizations – offer to provide support based on requests in support of existing coordination structures. The support package includes the following options:

1. Introductory Training on Humanitarian Coordination, the Centrality of Protection, Human Rights Based Approach & Protection Mainstreaming.
2. Training on basic protection coordination tools. (Mapping of capacities, 4W).
3. Support for needs and risks identification and analysis.
4. Support to develop COVID-19 Protection Strategies to HCTs and/or Government counterpart and set up COVID-19 Field Protection Working Groups or other coordination platforms.
5. Support in designing specific protection projects, programmes and response modalities for the COVID-19 protection programming and monitoring the response.
6. Support Advocacy initiatives and information campaigns on COVID19 response (common key messages and communication tools) including engagement with communities.
7. Support with specialized staff fully dedicated to the operation.

ANNEX 1: COVID19 RESPONSE COUNTRY COVERAGE AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

GHRP Coverage

At the moment, the GHRP is applicable to the following countries:

- **Countries included in the original GHRP:** Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Aruba, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curaçao, Dominican Rep., DPR Korea, DRC, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, oPt, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rep. of Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen and Zambia.
- **Countries listed under the additional GHRP coverage:** Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Pakistan, The Philippines, Djibouti, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Benín and Togo.

As there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19, the crisis evolves continuously creating additional humanitarian needs. Further updates to the above list will likely be necessary if the pandemic continues to expand.

Coordination Mechanism for the COVID-19 response

At the Global level, The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator oversees the overall coordination. Through the IASC principals, the Emergency Directors Group (EDG) provide operational support to countries with an existing HRP and COVID-19 response plan and liaise at field level with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and global coordination mechanisms such as the UN Country Management Team. WHO operates as a technical lead. For Cluster contexts, OCHA has established a COVID-19 response unit to support humanitarian country operations in coordination with the Global Clusters Coordinators Group (GCCG). For the refugee response, UNHCR will use the existing coordination structures in place at global and regional levels. IOM does the same for the Regional Migrant Response Plans.

At the field level, existing coordination mechanisms apply, including liaison with and support to national coordination structures. For operations with no prior humanitarian structures in place, Cluster Lead Agencies and humanitarian partners with regional presence and capacities will support the UNCT at the national level.

- **Cluster Approach:** In Countries with a Humanitarian Response Plan where the humanitarian programme cycle is implemented, the RC/HC and the HCT lead the response, with WHO providing lead support and expertise on public health issues in consultation with national authorities. In these countries, OCHA-led the intercluster and each Cluster Lead Agency the appropriate activated sector. In countries with previous Cluster-like coordination platforms, Clusters can be reactivated to address the impact of COVID-19. This activation will not follow the formal IASC activation procedure, but a specific process limited to the COVID-19 response.
- **Operations with other coordination mechanisms:** To ensure a coordinated response, the GHRP outlines how agency responses are to be coordinated based on existing humanitarian and national/local government coordination mechanisms. This includes countries with Refugee Response Plan or multi-country/sub-regional response plan, as well as countries with no formal coordination system beyond UN Country Teams. In some operations, Refugee Coordination models coexist with Cluster Coordination mechanisms. In countries with no prior humanitarian response coordination mechanism in place, Cluster Lead Agencies may support the UNCT to setup a national coordination mechanism to boost local coordination and response capacity, and to increase linkages with development actors.