GPC GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2020

Human Rights Engagement and How We Can Practically Use it in the Protection Cluster Context

16th September, 13.00- 15.00 CET

Rational/purpose

Humanitarian crises almost invariably result in immense human suffering, threats and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, where pre-existing protection concerns may trigger a crisis or exacerbate the situation and its impact on affected populations. With humanitarian crises because of conflicts, climate or natural hazards increasing all around the world, the need to ensure that the human rights of the affected populations are protected has become critically important.

This necessitates a closer collaboration and partnership between humanitarian and the human rights community at all levels, from programming to policy and at national, regional and global levels. International law provides a framework for human rights protection in the context of humanitarian crises and accords states the primary responsibility of protection. In addition, states and other actors involved in armed conflicts have the responsibility to comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and enable access of affected population to humanitarian assistance.

The TT on HRE is a platform established under the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) with the objectives to integrate a human rights approach in planning activities at field protection cluster levels; use human rights tools to better protect the human rights of persons affected by humanitarian crises; use human rights mechanisms as part of Protection Cluster efforts to raise awareness and advocate on behalf of the rights of persons affected by crises; follow-up on human rights engagement on behalf of persons affected by humanitarian crises; and exchange knowledge and good practices with regard to strengthened use of human rights mechanisms.

Through its work, the TT on HRE will support a sustained follow-up and concerted engagement and advocacy at local level with authorities and relevant stakeholders, as well as related advocacy at global level. Protection clusters are already collecting a large amount of information related to human rights and IHL concerns, but these protection issues may not be sufficiently analysed or addressed using and connecting with the well-established, relevant human rights frameworks, mechanisms, approaches and tools.

In this first comprehensive exchange with field protection cluster members since the task team activation, the topics outlined below will be tackled.

Expected Outcome

The session will be divided into two segments- a high level panel discussion with Special Rapporteurs and after a break, a technical level exchange on ways forward in terms of human rights engagement with field protection clusters.
Field protection and AoR coordinators will develop an understanding of the work of the Task Team on HRE and how the TT on HRE can support them through the following concrete ways:

- Reinforce ability to analyse the human rights environment in a context
- Strengthen ability to identify protection concerns and qualify them as human rights issues
- Give examples of how protection issues may be linked with human rights standards
- Explain the objective and purpose of human rights engagement, and how it is a process that goes beyond submitting reports
- Provide examples of protection issues, both long-term and immediate, that can be addressed through human rights engagement, including with human rights mechanisms
- Identify new opportunities for inter-agency collaboration or/and partnerships with other stakeholders which can arise from human rights engagement.

Key Messages

- Human rights engagement is part of a broader advocacy/protection strategy.
- Effective human rights engagement takes place over time. It involves more than isolated reports or activities.
- Human rights engagement should be participatory and inclusive. Affected persons must be full part of it.
- Human rights engagement can strengthen protection cluster’s credibility and reputation in delivering protection to persons of concern.
- It is important to understand: (a) who is involved in human rights engagement; (b) where processes take place; (c) how to create links between what PC does, what relevant mechanisms do, and what other stakeholders intend to do.
- There are a range of human rights mechanisms, and several ways in which PC can engage with them as part of a human rights engagement strategy. Each of the mechanisms have their own advantages and disadvantages.
- Engagement with human rights system is one of the possible responses to address identified human rights and protection issues. Considering available uses of human rights mechanisms should be an integral part of protection strategies and responses.
- The strategic and well-planned use of human rights mechanisms can enhance the protection of and the search for solutions for persons affected by the crises.
- It is necessary to exercise political awareness with respect to human rights communication: assessing the political context, public opinion, perceptions about invoking human rights;
- Effective human rights engagement is a multi-stakeholder endeavour and PC needs to be proactive in reaching out to and engaging with different stakeholders, including those that may not be PC’s traditional interlocutors and may have different mandates and functions.

Format/Content of the Event

- Platform: WEBEX; Language: English
- Interactive tools: Mural, Mentimeter, white board exercise
- Methodology: Plenary; break out groups; reflective exercise
Speakers/Moderator/ technical donor partner

- Moderators: HRE TT co-chairs
- Resource persons: Special Procedure Mandate Holders (ex. Special rapporteur on racism/ Special rapporteur on elderly persons) SR on IDP, SR on human rights defenders
- Identified donor as key technical partner in the preparing the session: Netherlands/ Switzerland/ Norway

Field Cluster/Operations

A HRE TT’s survey with field protection clusters was launched in July 2020 so as to identify pilot countries for support on human rights engagement front.

Background Reading

- HRE TT ToRs
- Action plan of the Task Team on HRE
- Background note on HRE TT for donors
- E-learning on human rights engagement in practice (to be launched on 28th August 2020)