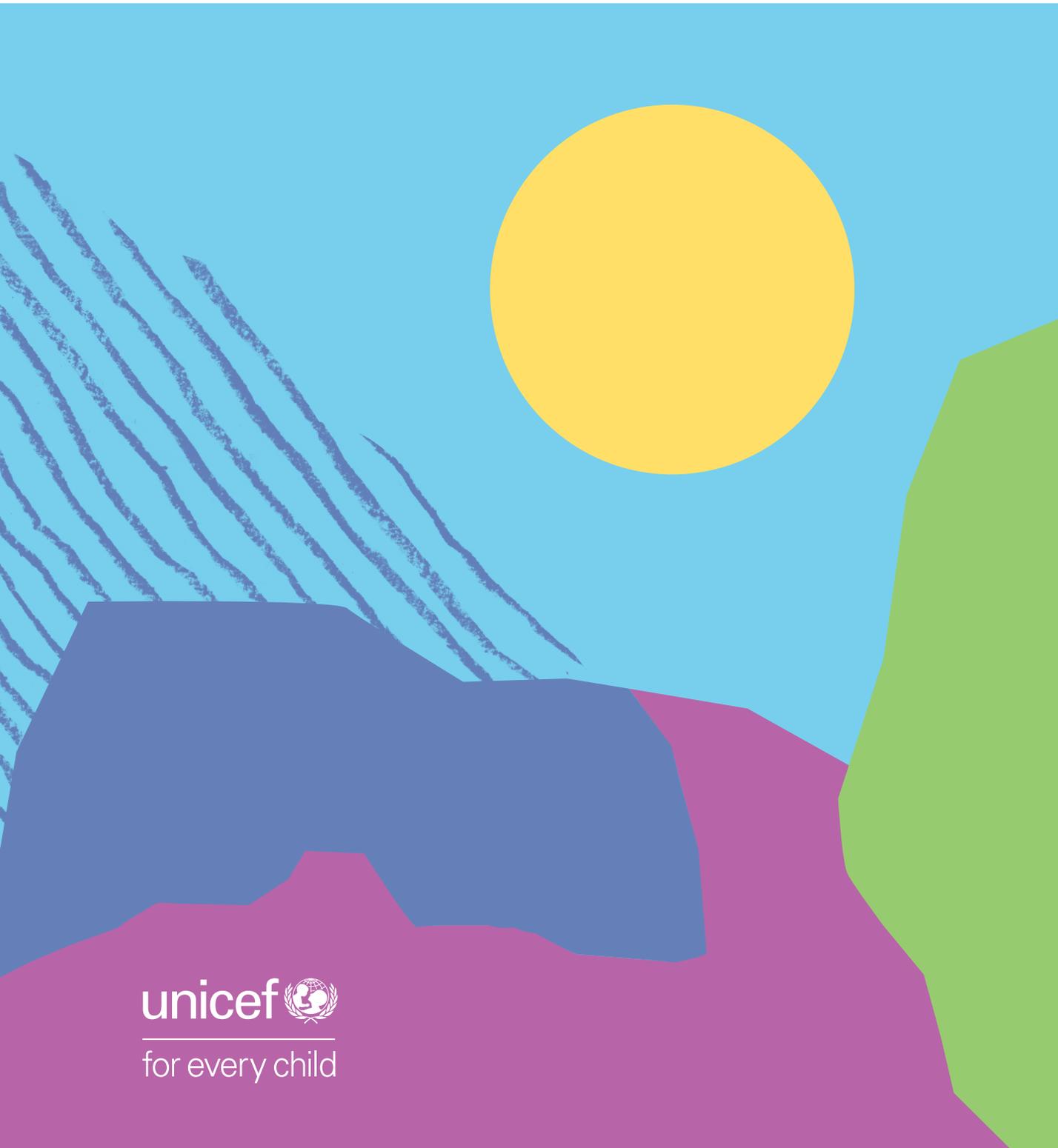


Kit 3.5: Programming

# GBV Coordination in Emergencies

# 3.5





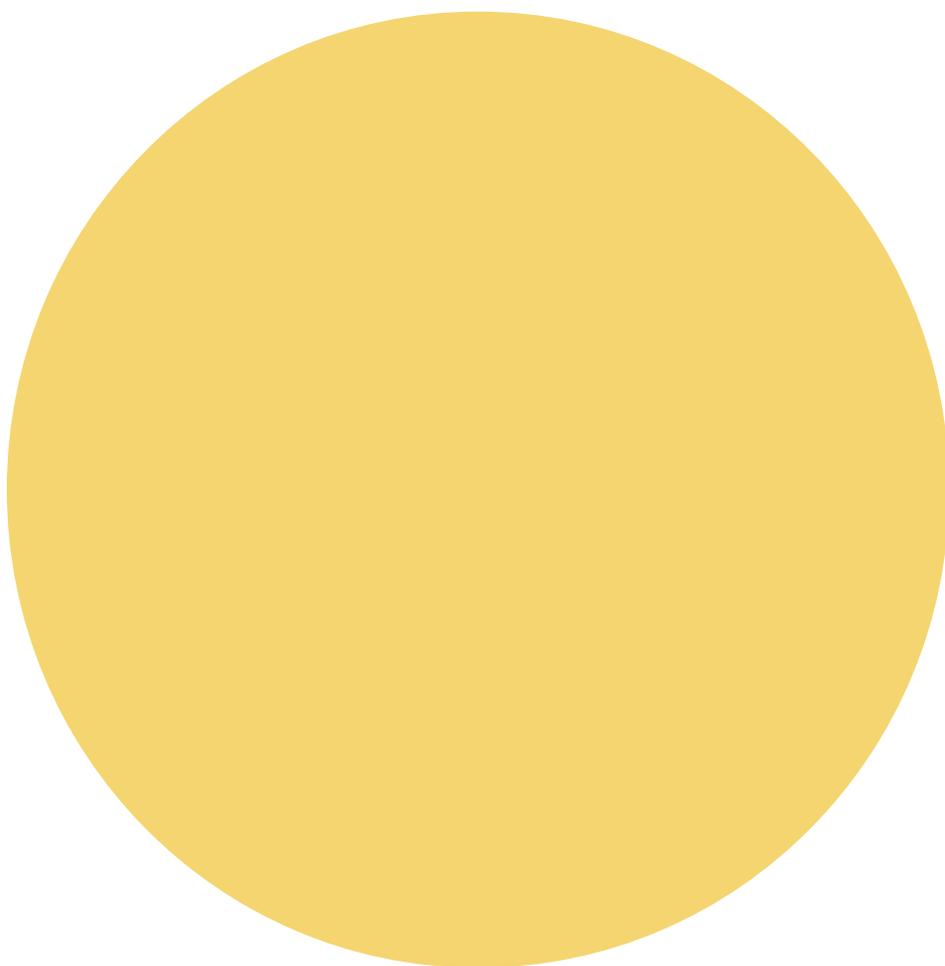
# GBV Coordination in Emergencies

## Key Messages

- From the largest multi-dimensional international peacekeeping mission to the smallest local women's group, **each actor has an important role to play in preventing, mitigating and responding to GBV.**
- **Good coordination identifies key problems, needs, capacities and gaps** in GBV prevention, mitigation and response; it also **builds ownership and collective responsibility** for addressing GBV across local, national and international humanitarian systems.
- UNICEF participates in and leads numerous coordination fora related to GBV. **Participation in GBV coordination helps to ensure linkages are established between humanitarian response to GBV and child protection.** In doing so, UNICEF helps to promote the needs, rights and perspectives of child survivors of GBV and those at high risk.
- Humanitarian coordination mechanisms are **pivotal for determining humanitarian priorities and influencing resource mobilization.**
- Good coordination between GBV actors and other sectors is important for **ensuring GBV risk mitigation is integrated across all humanitarian sectors and clusters in line with the IASC GBV Guidelines.** As a cluster-lead agency for numerous clusters, UNICEF has particular responsibilities for ensuring effective inter-cluster coordination.
- Participating in coordination mechanisms provides an opportunity to **build capacity of national and local partners and civil society actors.**

# Contents

3	Summary
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8	UNICEF's role in humanitarian coordination
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<b>36</b>	<b>Photo credits</b>



Summary

**Kit 3.5: Programming – GBV Coordination in Emergencies** complements existing guidance on both gender-based violence (GBV) and cluster coordination.

Materials included in this kit



Info Sheets

The Humanitarian Programming Cycle

UNHCR-Led Coordination

The Cluster Approach

UNICEF and Cluster Management at Country Level

Principles and Concepts for Civil-Military Coordination

Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1960



Baidoa, Somalia



Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

# Introduction

Effective coordination is a pillar of humanitarian action. Humanitarian coordination involves bringing together relevant stakeholders to ensure a coherent and effective response to an emergency.

In many settings, there is a significant number and diversity of actors (as shown in figure 1). Good coordination seeks to improve the collective humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership between all actors.

*“Coordination is essential to the success of humanitarian response. In most crisis situations, a large number of organizations will be working to provide support in the same area. Under these circumstances, coordination allows all actors to get a better understanding of the situation and to share effective practices. It prevents dangerous gaps in assistance and helps to avoid wasteful duplication.”<sup>1</sup>*

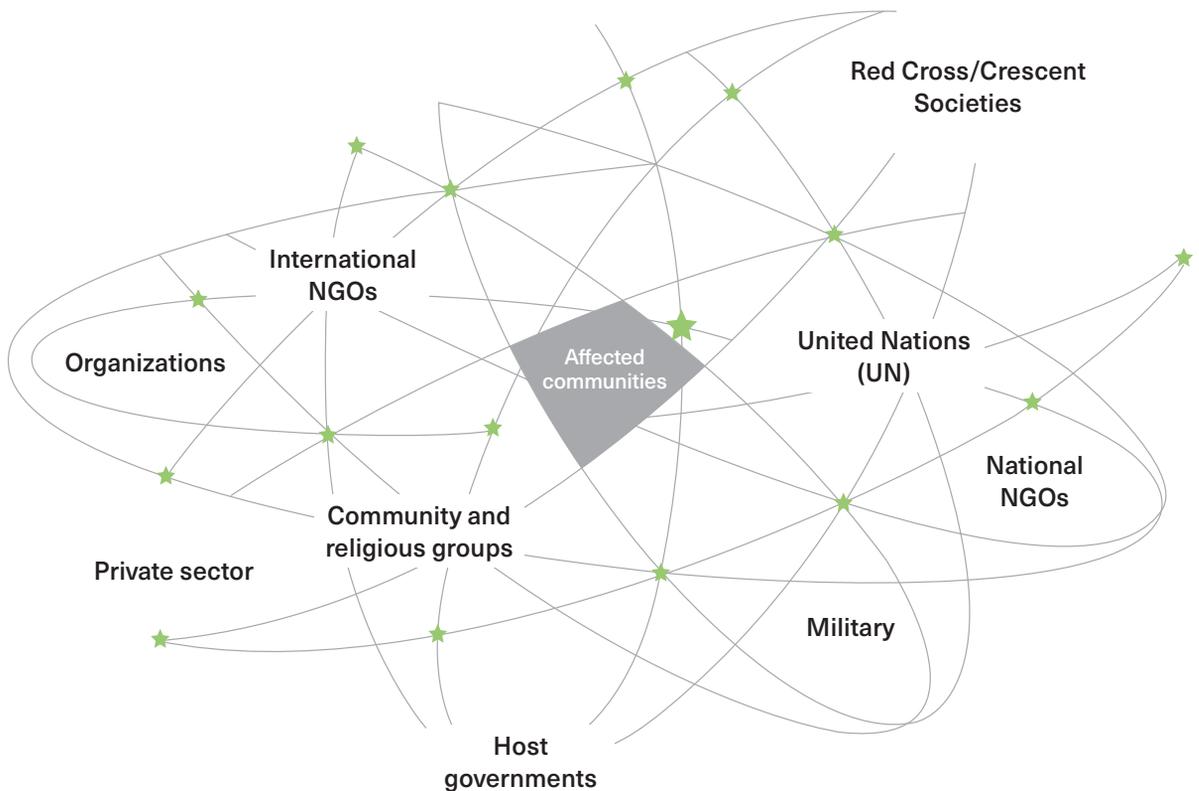


Figure 1: The diverse actors involved in humanitarian response<sup>2</sup>

1 Knox Clarke, P. and L. Campbell, 'Exploring coordination in humanitarian clusters', Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and Overseas Development Institute, London, 2015.

2 Saavedra, L. and P. Knox-Clarke, 'Better together? The benefits and challenges of coordination in the field for effective humanitarian response', Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and Overseas Development Institute, London, 2015.



#### The Humanitarian Programming Cycle

Emergency coordination focuses on coherent action across **the humanitarian programming cycle**: from joint assessment of the situation to identifying priority needs and gaps, agreeing on common strategies for protection and assistance, mobilizing funding and other resources, and monitoring progress. Coordination between key players is also essential for addressing context-specific challenges, such as negotiating access to affected populations and advocating for adherence to international law by parties to a conflict.

There is no 'one size fits all' coordination model – the best approach in each setting is determined by contextual factors such as the nature of the emergency, the phase of response, the capacity and mandate of different actors, national disaster management frameworks and capabilities, and other factors.

The main models for humanitarian coordination include:

- 1. Government-led coordination**, with sector groups reporting to a designated government disaster management body. In such situations, international humanitarian support augments national coordination capacity.
- 2. UNHCR-led coordination** in refugee settings, as this agency is designated to coordinate international humanitarian response within refugee contexts.
- 3. Internationally-led coordination under the cluster approach**, activated when existing coordination mechanisms are overwhelmed or constrained in their ability to respond to identified needs in line with humanitarian principles.

No matter which coordination structure is in place, several factors have been identified

that contribute to more effective humanitarian coordination. These include:<sup>3</sup>

- **Complementarity with and support to national structures.** International efforts should, wherever possible, support or complement existing national and local coordination structures rather than creating parallel structures and processes.
- **National leadership.** Coordination efforts should be led or co-led wherever possible by national authorities. International actors should take the lead in situations where national authorities' ability to lead is 'compromised' or where "there are significant discrepancies between national authorities and the humanitarian actors in terms of the principles and objectives of the humanitarian response".<sup>4</sup>
- **Adaptability.** Coordination mechanisms need to adapt on an ongoing basis to the changing context, the phase of crisis and available capacities on the ground.
- **Inclusivity and diversity.** Coordination platforms, tools and financing need to "reflect the diversity of actors meeting humanitarian needs and build stronger connections between national and international actors and between humanitarian and non-humanitarians."<sup>5</sup>



#### UNHCR-led Coordination



#### The Cluster Approach

*"Many countries are taking a greater role in global decision-making and coordination around humanitarian issues, emphasizing paragraphs three and four of General Assembly Resolution 46/182 concerning state sovereignty."*

*UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 affirms that each State has the primary role in initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory."<sup>6</sup>*

3 See the following publications for research and analysis related to humanitarian coordination: Knox Clarke and Campbell, 'Exploring coordination in humanitarian clusters'; and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Leaving No-One Behind: Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Age of the Sustainable Development Goals', UNOCHA, New York, 2016.

4 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 'Operational Guidance for Cluster Lead Agencies on Working with National Authorities', IASC, Geneva, 2011.

5 UNOCHA, 'Leaving No-One Behind', p. 74.

6 Saavedra and Knox-Clarke, 'Better together?', p. 21.



## Resources

- ▶ **Exploring Coordination in Humanitarian Clusters**  
*Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and Overseas Development Institute (2015)*  
<[www.alnap.org/resource/20360](http://www.alnap.org/resource/20360)>
- ▶ **Better Together? The benefits and challenges of coordination in the field for effective humanitarian response**  
*Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and Overseas Development Institute (2015)*  
<[www.alnap.org/resource/21413](http://www.alnap.org/resource/21413)>
- ▶ **Conference Report: South-South Humanitarianism**  
*Centre for Global Governance and Policy (2014)*  
<<http://www.jgu.edu.in/public/cgpp-research-report/South-South-Humanitarianism-Conference-Report-JSIA.pdf>>
- ▶ **Leaving No-One Behind: Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Age of the Sustainable Development Goals**  
*UN OCHA (2016)*  
<[www.unocha.org/node/214196](http://www.unocha.org/node/214196)>
- ▶ **Improving Humanitarian Response: Lessons from Operational Peer Reviews (webinar)**  
*IASC (2014)*  
<[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeRC3n58QHQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeRC3n58QHQ)>
- ▶ **The Role of National Governments in International Humanitarian Response**  
*Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and Overseas Development Institute (2010)*  
<[www.alnap.org/resource/6062](http://www.alnap.org/resource/6062)>
- ▶ **Humanitarian Evaluation and Learning Portal: Coordination Resources**  
*Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance*  
<<https://www.alnap.org/our-topics/coordination>>



Juba, South Sudan



Danamadja, Chad

## UNICEF's role in humanitarian coordination

Establishment of appropriate sectoral coordination for Child Protection (CP), GBV and Mental Health and Psycho-social Support (MHPSS) is included under UNICEF's CCCs. This does not necessarily imply that UNICEF always takes the lead role.

UNICEF's commitment to coordination in humanitarian action is articulated within the *Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action*<sup>7</sup> (see Section 1.12, Inter-Agency Humanitarian Reform).

As a large UN agency working across development and emergency contexts, UNICEF is involved in sector and **cluster management at country level** before, during and after emergencies. As a development partner, UNICEF supports governments to strengthen coordination preparedness and

capacity in emergency- and disaster-prone countries, as well as during recovery.

UNICEF is a designated lead agency within the cluster system. Globally, UNICEF is responsible for leading/co-leading **three clusters**: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); Nutrition; and Education (which it co-leads with Save the Children). UNICEF is also responsible for leading the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) within the Protection Cluster. UNICEF is accountable to affected populations, to the humanitarian coordinator (HC) and emergency relief coordinator, and to national authorities for effective functioning and performance of these clusters and AoR. Guidance exists to support country office (CO) cluster leadership across all clusters.



### Resources

#### ► Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices

*UNICEF (2015)*

<[www.unicef.inemergencies.com/downloads/eresource/docs/Clusters/Cluster%20Guidance%20Eng%20final%20version.pdf](http://www.unicef.inemergencies.com/downloads/eresource/docs/Clusters/Cluster%20Guidance%20Eng%20final%20version.pdf)>



UNICEF  
and Cluster  
Management at  
Country Level

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the CCCs, see <[www.unicef.org/publications/files/CCC\\_042010.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CCC_042010.pdf)>.

# GBV coordination in emergencies

Good coordination is particularly important for GBV prevention, mitigation and response in emergencies. This is due to the multidisciplinary, multi-sector and multi-agency nature of GBV prevention, mitigation and response. For instance:

- **Responding to GBV** requires action from a large variety of actors. Addressing the different needs of survivors requires input and services from health, psychosocial support, social services, community, child protection, law enforcement and justice actors and systems.
- **Mitigating risk of GBV** requires every sector of humanitarian response – programmatic and operational – to implement essential actions as set out in the *IASC Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action* ('**IASC GBV Guidelines**').<sup>8</sup>
- **Prevention programming** involves engaging with different groups and services, from national government and non-government sectors and from the community, to address the underlying cases and drivers of GBV.
- **In situations of armed conflict**, action to protect civilians from GBV and to monitor and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) goes beyond the humanitarian system and involves coordinating with peace and security actors where they have a mandate to protect civilians.

In addition to the multiple sectors involved, addressing GBV requires coordinated partnerships between government, civil society and the community – and, in some settings, with international security forces.

From the largest multi-dimensional international peacekeeping mission to the smallest local women's group, each actor has an important role to play in preventing, mitigating

and responding to GBV and protecting the rights of girls and women at risk of violence. Effective coordination harnesses and leverages the expertise, resources, relationships and networks that different actors bring to GBV prevention, mitigation and response. It is therefore essential to ensure all actors are involved, are well-coordinated and have a shared understanding of the diverse mandates, roles and responsibilities of others.

Good coordination not only identifies **key problems, needs, capacities and gaps** in GBV prevention, mitigation and response; it also builds ownership and collective responsibility for addressing GBV across local, national and international humanitarian systems.

While formally activated clusters have specific characteristics and accountabilities, the needs that coordination must address and the coordination functions in emergencies are the same regardless of the coordination arrangements. The **core functions** of a GBV sub-cluster or working group are:

1. **Supporting service delivery** to affected communities by providing a platform for agreeing on approaches and eliminating duplication of efforts;
2. **Informing strategic decision-making** of the Humanitarian Coordinator/Humanitarian Country Teams (HC/HCT) through coordination of needs assessment, gap analysis and prioritization;
3. **Planning and strategy development**, including sectoral plans, adherence to standards and funding needs;
4. **Advocacy** to address identified concerns on behalf of cluster participants and the affected population;
5. **Monitoring and reporting** on the cluster strategy and results, and recommending corrective action where necessary; and
6. **Contingency planning/preparedness/national capacity-building**, where needed and where capacity exists within the cluster.

★  
See the IASC  
GBV Guidelines

8 See <[www.gbvguidelines.org](http://www.gbvguidelines.org)>.



## Resources

- ▶ **Handbook for Coordinating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings**  
*GBV AoR Working Group (2010)*  
<[www.refworld.org/docid/52146d634.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/52146d634.html)>
- ▶ **Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery**  
*IASC (2015)*  
<<http://gbvguidelines.org>>
- ▶ **Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level**  
*IASC (2015)*  
<[www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/document/iasc-reference-module-cluster-coordination-country-level-0](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/document/iasc-reference-module-cluster-coordination-country-level-0)>
- ▶ **Operational Guidance for Cluster Lead Agencies on Working with National Authorities**  
*IASC (2011)*  
<[www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/IASC%20Guidance%20on%20Working%20with%20National%20Authorities\\_July2011.pdf](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/IASC%20Guidance%20on%20Working%20with%20National%20Authorities_July2011.pdf)>



Giridih, India

★  
See the IASC  
GBV Guidelines

# UNICEF and GBV coordination

UNICEF participates in and leads numerous coordination fora related to GBV (see the following case study for examples). Providing support to GBV coordination in emergency settings at national and sub-national levels is very important for the following reasons:

- Humanitarian coordination mechanisms are the pivotal mechanism for **determining humanitarian priorities** and influencing resource mobilization and allocation.
- UNICEF brings **expertise and capacity** in GBVIE prevention, mitigation and response. UNICEF attracts and deploys high-quality professional and experienced GBV and CP personnel who contribute significantly to GBV coordination efforts.
- Participation in GBV coordination helps to **ensure linkages** are established between humanitarian response to GBV and CP. In doing so, UNICEF helps to promote the needs, rights and perspectives of child survivors of GBV and those at high risk.
- Good coordination between GBV actors and other sectors is important for ensuring GBV **risk mitigation is integrated** across all humanitarian sectors and clusters in line with the **IASC GBV Guidelines**.
- UNICEF often supports **government-led GBV coordination efforts** at national and sub-national levels.
- Participating in coordination mechanisms provides an opportunity to **build capacity of national and local partners** and civil society actors.
- Coordination enables UNICEF to **foster effective relationships** with other actors with a mandate for preventing, mitigating or responding to GBV – for example, in monitoring and responding to CRSV and integrating GBV into other clusters/sectors for which UNICEF is a lead agency.



Bangui, Central African Republic



### Case Study

In **Central African Republic**, UNICEF was a key actor in GBV-related humanitarian coordination, as well as in relevant peace and security-related coordination mechanisms. UNICEF was an active member of the GBV sub-cluster and the MARA Working Group, and it led the CP sub-cluster, the MRM Working Group and the UN Country Team Crisis Committee for sexual exploitation and abuse.

In post-earthquake **Nepal**, UNICEF was an active and valued member of the GBV sub-cluster at national level. The agency also provided critical support to the government for district-level GBV and CP coordination through deployment of district-level child protection officers responsible for both GBV and CP. UNICEF also chaired the anti-trafficking task-force established under the CP sub-cluster.

In **Somalia**, UNICEF played a critical role in GBV and CP coordination at national and sub-national levels, helping

to set the strategic direction at the national level and operationalize it in the district in which UNICEF was the lead agency. UNICEF's trusted relationships and ability to engage a wide variety of stakeholders, from armed actors to government agencies to donors and sub-cluster members, were very important to both humanitarian and peace and security coordination efforts.

Each of these settings was characterized by a completely different coordination architecture and set of actors; yet in each of them, UNICEF has played a critical role in GBV coordination involving different sets of humanitarian, government, and peace and security actors. UNICEF has provided essential support and capacity strengthening to government actors to boost their capacity to lead coordination efforts. UNICEF has also forged close links between the CP and GBV coordination mechanisms, ensuring that GBV concerns were reflected in CP sector priorities and programming, and that the rights and needs of child survivors of GBV were reflected in GBV sector priorities and programming.

From the largest multi-dimensional international peacekeeping mission to the smallest local women's group, each actor has an important role to play in preventing, mitigating and responding to GBV and protecting the rights of girls and women at risk of violence.

# GBV coordination arrangements

The senior humanitarian leadership – including government, where relevant – is responsible for ensuring that appropriate GBV coordination structures are in place in each country. There are no standard coordination arrangements because emergencies vary in type, scale and complexity, and approaches to coordination must reflect the needs and realities on the ground. Coordination arrangements also change over time as the situation and response evolves. Coordination leadership, structure, cluster/working group membership and terms of reference may therefore not only vary across settings, but also evolve over time.

## Leadership of cluster/sectoral coordination

The following principles generally apply to GBV coordination leadership arrangements in situations *not* led by UNHCR.

**In disaster-prone settings and settings with national leadership of humanitarian response**, preparedness planning should include working with the government to determine capacity gaps and to support national disaster management agencies and/or other relevant government agencies to assume leadership of GBV coordination.

**Where the cluster system is activated and a protection cluster is in place**, UNFPA assumes responsibility for GBV coordination at the national level. UNICEF supports UNFPA as an active member of the sub-cluster in national and sub-national GBV coordination. In some contexts, this could include UNICEF leadership of sub-national GBV coordination bodies, depending on operational capacity. Through its role as the lead of the CP AoR, UNICEF promotes linkages between field-level CP working groups and GBV working groups to improve access to services for child survivors.

A range of other actors is involved in GBV coordination at national and sub-national levels, including relevant international and national non-government organizations (NGOs), International Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies and government actors. Where neither UNFPA nor UNICEF are operational or able to assume leadership at the sub-national level, another UN entity, an international or national NGO, or the government will take a leadership role in GBV coordination. *Again, local leadership should be supported wherever feasible.*

**Where the cluster system is not activated and there is no formal humanitarian coordination mechanism in place**, UNICEF country offices should engage with UNFPA, relevant entities (including the government, unless it is not appropriate to do so) and other actors identified above to advocate for the establishment of an inter-agency GBV coordination mechanism and seek agreement on leadership.

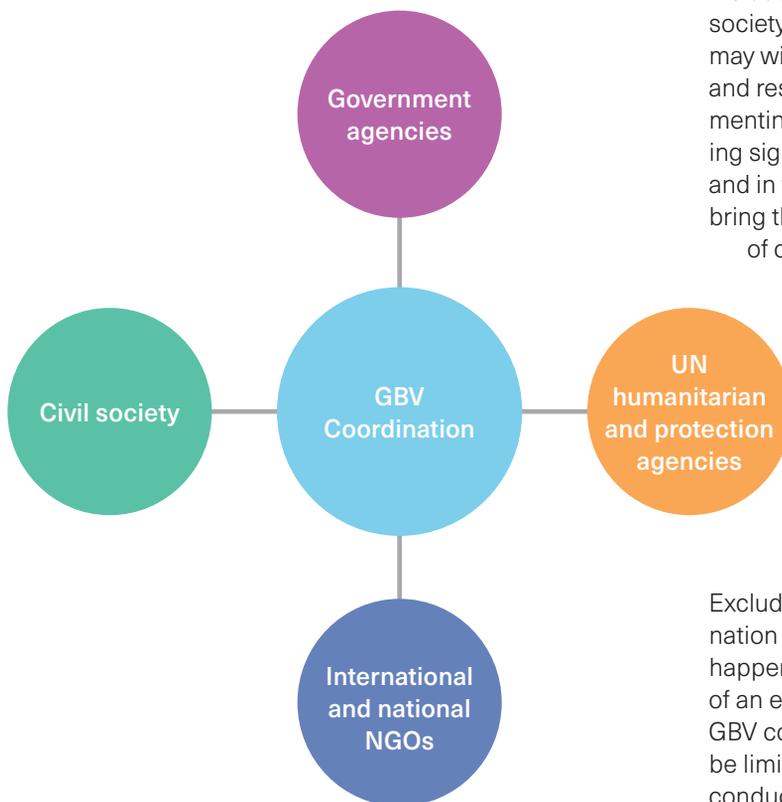
Regardless of which coordination arrangements are put in place at the beginning of an emergency, it is very important to work with existing GBV-related networks and partners. In all circumstances, *any pre-existing inter-agency coordination forum for addressing GBV should be considered as a potential mechanism for coordinating emergency response* and ongoing humanitarian action on GBV.

Evidence suggests that *co-lead* arrangements are effective when well-managed. In some settings, government authorities co-lead GBV coordination, while in others, an NGO with GBV expertise may co-lead. Wherever possible and appropriate, UNICEF supports government and civil society actors to lead or co-lead GBV coordination.

UNICEF may assume responsibility for coordination leadership at a sub-national level where there is sufficient capacity – for example, a GBV or CP specialist who can ‘double-hat’ in UNICEF programming and GBV coordination.

## Membership of coordination working groups

Membership of GBV coordination bodies varies across settings and is determined at the local level. International, national and local actors with a role in GBV assessment, advocacy and programming are all involved. These commonly include government health and social services agencies; UN humanitarian and protection agencies; international and national NGOs; and civil society organizations and groups.



**Government agencies** include ministries for health, social services, welfare, gender, women and children, and other entities. In conflict-affected settings in which government forces or authorities are implicated in the deliberate use of sexual and other gender-based violence against civilians, government participation in coordination may not be appropriate.

**UN humanitarian and protection agencies** include UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UN Women, WHO and OHCHR. The interface between the GBV coordination body and UN political or peace-keeping missions needs to be carefully defined (see below for more information).

**International and national NGOs** include all NGOs involved in GBV prevention and response programming, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, which may participate as observers.

**Civil society organizations and groups** include community-based and other civil society groups. Many local organizations may wish to be involved in GBV coordination and response, even if they are not yet implementing GBV programmes. As well as bringing significant expertise in different areas and in the local context, these groups also bring the critical voices and perspectives of children and women to humanitarian response. Such involvement and participation is a core principle for UNICEF humanitarian action and is essential for assessing whether humanitarian assistance and protection are timely, relevant and accountable to women, girls and other affected community members.

Excluding these actors from GBV coordination is poor practice and should not happen. During the initial or acute phase of an emergency, national level cluster/ GBV coordination group membership may be limited to agencies with the capacity to conduct assessments and deliver immediate services and programmes. However, it is essential that local actors are represented and included in GBV coordination, especially at the sub-national level.

At times, making sure that diverse local and civil society actors are involved and empowered within coordination requires adopting a flexible and creative approach, while also ensuring GBV coordination bodies work quickly to facilitate assessments, prioritize

needs and mobilize resources in the early stages of response. In some clusters, the use of a 'strategic group' of humanitarian actors may be delegated by key decision-making in the short-term to ensure coordination bodies are inclusive whilst also working quickly. To this end, the simple practice of issuing an agenda in advance of a meeting (outlining any key decisions that need to be made and by whom) has been highlighted as a best practice.<sup>9</sup>

## National and sub-national management arrangements

GBV coordination mechanisms are usually established at the national level, with sub-national structures in place as required. Humanitarian operations that employ national and sub-national coordination arrangements have been found to be more effective than ones that coordinate through a single national mechanism.

Sub-national coordination facilitates decentralized decision-making and shortens response time. This type of coordination is critical when emergency responses take place in remote areas or extend over a large

geographical area. Different regions may have different needs and – as a result – different strategic objectives and prioritization.

GBV coordination structures should only be established as needed; should build on existing groups or networks; and should be deactivated as soon as those needs are met or transitioned to locally owned and managed groups.

Sub-national GBV working groups are well-positioned to:

- Adapt GBV prevention and response standards to local circumstances;
- Work closely with local authorities and other actors on the ground;
- Engage with and strengthen accountability to affected populations;
- Identify capacity gaps, problems and local solutions; and
- Support other sectors and clusters to integrate GBV risk mitigation within their operations and assistance.



Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

9 Saavedra and Knox-Clarke, 'Better Together?'

## Tips for effective GBV coordination

The following tips complement existing guidance (see the following Resource list) on GBV coordination and cluster coordination.

UNICEF COs can help to build and sustain effective GBV coordination by encouraging, and where relevant contributing to, the following:

- a) **Support government agencies to prepare for GBV coordination in disaster- and emergency-prone contexts;**
- b) **Include and involve all relevant actors in GBV coordination;**
- c) **Ensure effective governance arrangements between national and sub-national mechanisms;**
- d) **Review and adapt coordination arrangements over time as the situation evolves; and**
- e) **Continually assess sub-cluster/working group performance.**

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### a) Support government agencies to prepare for GBV coordination in disaster- and emergency-prone contexts

- ✓ In disaster-prone settings, work with the government to identify how GBV fits within the national disaster management coordination architecture.
- ✓ Identify GBV coordination roles and responsibilities with relevant government ministries/agencies.
- ✓ Assist relevant government agencies to develop readiness to lead GBV coordination efforts by addressing capacity gaps in line with international standards.

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### b) Include and involve all relevant actors in GBV coordination

- ✓ Conduct a stakeholder analysis to identify who is and should be involved in GBV coordination. Map existing networks and groups addressing GBV, and consult with them about establishing emergency GBV coordination structures.
- ✓ Make sure national actors, civil society and governments participate, have influence and play an active role in GBV coordination alongside international organizations.
- ✓ Where there are high numbers of local actors wishing to be involved in GBV coordination with limited experience in GBV programming, consider implementing an information sharing initiative to build knowledge about humanitarian response to GBV, including on ethics and safety.
- ✓ Establish flexible engagement models where there are many agencies wishing to participate in GBV coordination in the early stages of response. For example, establish a strategic decision-making group comprised of organizations implementing large-scale GBV programming for rapid decision-making, and establish smaller technical working groups to address other aspects of GBV response to which local actors can bring their expertise.
- ✓ Identify how to reflect the voices and perspectives of affected girls and women in coordination mechanisms. Consider creative ways of holding humanitarian actors accountable to affected girls and women through surveys, action research, representation and other methods.



Bambari, Central African Republic

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**c) Ensure effective governance arrangements between national and sub-national mechanisms**

- ✓ Establish national GBV sub-cluster/coordination group terms of reference (TORs) and disseminate widely.
- ✓ Base sub-national cluster/sector coordination core functions and TORs on national TORs, making sure there is clarity on roles and responsibilities of national and sub-national groups.
- ✓ Develop clear lines of communication and accountability between national and sub-national working groups.
- ✓ Integrate sub-national working groups into information management and planning processes.
- ✓ Resource sub-national coordination.
- ✓ Hold national-level GBV coordination meetings after sub-national ones so that national meetings are based on and responsive to realities in the field.
- ✓ Produce written record of meetings, and make sure they are shared at both national and sub-national levels.

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**d) Review and adapt coordination arrangements over time as the situation evolves**

- ✓ Review coordination leadership, membership, structure, management, terms of reference and other factors periodically as the situation evolves to adapt coordination arrangements to the changing context, phase of crisis and emerging capacities on the ground.

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**e) Continually assess sub-cluster/working group performance**

- ✓ Conduct regular internal evaluation of GBV sub-cluster working group performance. For example:
  - Routinely ask members for feedback about meeting management, inclusion and other relevant factors at the end of each meeting;
  - Implement a self-assessment process to measure sub-cluster/sector progress against TORs on a quarterly basis; and
  - Put a mechanism in place to solicit feedback from affected communities regarding priorities and performance of humanitarian coordination.

## GBV coordination checklist

The following is a checklist detailing essential actions for effective GBV coordination.

### GBV coordination checklist

Government readiness to lead GBV coordination is supported by UNICEF and other partners as part of emergency preparedness planning.

National and local civil society actors are represented and active in GBV coordination mechanisms, and their expertise is recognized and harnessed.

Management arrangements and expectations for national and sub-national GBV coordination are clearly defined and aligned, including TORs, roles, responsibilities and communication lines.

GBV coordination arrangements allow for timely decision-making and action, as well as participation of a diverse range of stakeholders.

A plan is in place for periodic review of GBV coordination arrangements.

Measures are in place to continually assess GBV sub-cluster/working group functioning, performance and accountability to girls and women.

## Coordinating with others

Coordination with other humanitarian clusters/sectors and with actors outside the humanitarian system is essential for preventing, mitigating and responding to GBV in emergencies. There are sometimes multiple overlapping humanitarian and peace and security mechanisms with different but complementary roles or mandates for some aspect of GBV prevention and response. Therefore, it is vital to create strong linkages between different coordination mechanisms while respecting the mandates of others and upholding humanitarian principles.

There is no 'one size fits all' model for how GBV cluster or sectoral coordination bodies intersect and interact with other humanitarian, military, or peace and security coordination mechanisms. It is critical, however, that the relationships, areas of collaboration and parameters for information sharing are agreed on and documented, and that all actors understand and respect the mandate and operational concerns of others – such as the imperative for humanitarian actors to maintain the perception of impartiality and neutrality.

The most appropriate framework for inter-agency coordination is best determined at the local level. Country-level coordination arrangements require a pragmatic approach that is flexible; is based on country-specific circumstances; avoids duplication of

functions; and prevents overburdening actors and confusion of roles.<sup>10</sup> This entails, among other things, ensuring clarity, principles and procedures for humanitarian and military interaction for information sharing and protection activities.

At minimum, GBV coordination bodies *must* ensure that all other actors with a role in GBV prevention, mitigation and response are familiar with the basic standards for practice – in particular, standards pertaining to ethics, safety, survivors’ rights, taking action, and those set out in the **IASC GBV Guidelines**.<sup>11</sup>

★  
See the IASC  
GBV Guidelines

Examples of different inter-agency mechanisms/groups with which GBV sub-clusters/working groups commonly engage are listed below. This list is not exhaustive.

## Humanitarian clusters/sectors

All humanitarian clusters/sectors have clearly defined responsibilities and essential actions they must implement to mitigate risk of GBV. Coordination is an integral strategy for implementing the essential actions to mitigate GBV in line with the **IASC GBV Guidelines**. This requires coordination between GBV and other sectoral coordination mechanisms. GBV sub-clusters/working groups play an incredibly important role in providing technical support to other humanitarian sectors, helping them better understand the nature of GBV in the context or advising them on how to implement essential sectoral actions. As a cluster lead agency for numerous clusters, UNICEF plays a key role in making sure effective inter-cluster coordination is taking place. Equally importantly, coordination between sections within UNICEF is vital for the development of integrated programming to reduce GBV risks within all UNICEF humanitarian operations.

See the following case study on coordination between GBV and CP actors in Jordan for an example of intersectoral coordination,

and see the second case study from South Sudan on coordination between UNICEF sections to enhance GBV risk mitigation.



## Case Studies

### **Intersectoral coordination in Jordan for the development of joint CP and GBV standards, capacity and operating procedures in a protracted refugee context**

Beginning in 2012, UN agencies, international NGOs and the Government of Jordan worked closely together to establish joint CP and GBV standards, capacity and protocols for prevention of and response to both violence against children and GBV. Shared CP and GBV standard operating procedures were first produced in 2014 and have since been regularly revised. The project Steering Committee member agencies collaborated over multiple years to foster good coordination between over 40 government and non-government (including national and international) CP and GBV actors. This case study illustrates the importance of effective coordination and partnerships in GBV prevention and response, and it highlights the value of inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration in establishing streamlined services and programmes.

### **Inter-section coordination in South Sudan to improve girls' and women's safety and protection from GBV**

In 2014, WASH actors in South Sudan were in the design phase of a new Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in Malakal. UNICEF coordinated closely with the WASH sector to support development of strategies to increase girls' and women's safety and security.

10 Gender-Based Violence Information Management System and United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence, 'Provisional Guidance Note on the Intersections Between the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) and the Monitoring and Analysis Reporting Arrangements (MARA)', 2016.

11 See <[www.gbvguidelines.org](http://www.gbvguidelines.org)>.

The GBV and WASH teams together developed practical tools and strategies to address identified risks, particularly around latrine structure, placement and safety monitoring. Regular joint walk-arounds through the PoC site were conducted by GBV and WASH staff to ensure latrines were being built according to specification. When problems arose, WASH and GBV worked together to brainstorm solutions. The collaborative approach between GBV and WASH teams in Malakal was scaled up nationally when UNICEF WASH and CP sections designed and implemented a three-year (2014–2017), US \$23.9 million GBV-WASH project to provide adequate and gender-sensitive WASH facilities and services for the purposes of empowering women and mitigating against GBV in Upper Nile, Unity, Lakes, Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria, and Jonglei states. This case study illustrates the importance and benefit of effective internal coordination to achieve GBV risk mitigation.

For the full versions of both case studies, see the *Case Studies Booklet* in **Kit 1: Getting Started**.



### Resources

- ▶ **Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery**  
*IASC (2015)*  
<<http://gbvguidelines.org>>

## PSEA networks

Each country is expected to have an inter-agency Network on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). UNICEF often co-leads PSEA Networks, which serve as the primary body for coordination and oversight on preventing, mitigating and

responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The networks function under the auspices of the RC/HC, and membership includes focal points from each UN entity, NGO and international organization on the ground, including the Conduct and Discipline Unit if a UN peacekeeping mission is present. Where appropriate, government focal points are also members of the PSEA Network. The country-level network is responsible for developing an inter-agency action plan for addressing SEA in the country.

Appropriate linkages are required between the PSEA Network and other relevant coordination fora – in particular the GBV and CP sub-clusters. Coordination between GBV sub-clusters/working groups and PSEA Networks can help to ensure PSEA Networks operate within safe, ethical and good practice standards for responding to survivors of SEA. GBV sub-clusters/working groups should support PSEA Networks to:

- Implement a survivor-centred approach to SEA response;
- Establish good practice procedures for victim/survivor assistance;
- Access information regarding existing GBV referral pathways and services; and
- Ensure appropriate ongoing case management for SEA survivors.



### Resources

- ▶ **Terms of Reference for In-country Network on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN/NGO/IGO Personnel, and other SEA resources:**  
<[www.pseataaskforce.org/](http://www.pseataaskforce.org/)>

## Peace and security actors

In armed conflict contexts, there may be a UN political or peacekeeping mission or another international military presence with a mandate to protect civilians, including from sexual violence perpetrated in the context of armed conflict. In some settings, GBV

sub-clusters or working groups may need to interact with UN Missions on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) issues.

In some contexts, UN forces are engaged in combat operations and are themselves a party to the conflict. In these contexts, it is essential that humanitarian agencies preserve their actual and perceived neutrality, impartiality and independence and maintain their ability to negotiate access and deliver assistance.<sup>12</sup> It is vital that this coordination is done through the appropriate civil-military coordination channels and in line with **principles for civil-military (civ-mil) coordination**.



Principles and Concepts for Civil-Military Coordination

*"Protection of civilians has increasingly become an objective humanitarians share with UN peace operations. Interaction between peace operations and humanitarian actors is necessary to ensure better protection outcomes by exchanging information and analysis on protection issues, and seeking ways to maximize synergies in areas of mutual concern."*<sup>13</sup>



### Tools

See **Kit 3.3: Programming – Building Accountability**.



Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1960



### Resources

- ▶ **Diagnostic Tool and Guidance on the Interaction Between Field Protection Clusters and UN Missions**  
*Global Protection Cluster (2013)*  
<[www.globalprotectioncluster.org/\\_assets/files/tools\\_and\\_guidance/GPC\\_Diagnostic\\_Tool\\_Interaction\\_UN\\_Missions\\_2013\\_EN.pdf](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/tools_and_guidance/GPC_Diagnostic_Tool_Interaction_UN_Missions_2013_EN.pdf)>

- ▶ **UN OCHA Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Publications**  
<<https://www.unocha.org/legacy/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/publications>>
- ▶ **United Nations Civil-Military Coordination Field Handbook**  
*UNOCHA Civil-Military Coordination Section (2015)*  
<[https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/CMCoord%20Field%20Handbook%20v1.0\\_Sept2015.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/CMCoord%20Field%20Handbook%20v1.0_Sept2015.pdf)>
- ▶ **Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies**  
*UNOCHA (2008)*  
<<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/ENGLISH%20VERSION%20Guidelines%20for%20Complex%20Emergencies.pdf>>
- ▶ **Guidelines for the Coordination between Humanitarian Actors and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan**  
*UNCT and UNMISS (2014)*  
<<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/A05%20Guidelines%20for%20the%20Coordination%20between%20Humanitarian%20Actors%20and%20the%20UNMISS.pdf>>

## MRM task force and MARA working group

In settings where **Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1612** applies, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) or RC/HC establishes a 1612 Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) related to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). In settings where **SCR 1960** applies, the SRSG or RC/HC establishes a Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) working group. These bodies are made up of all relevant UN entities, represented at the most senior level in country.

<sup>12</sup> Global Protection Cluster, *Diagnostic Tool and Guidance on the Interaction between field Protection Clusters and UN Missions*, GPC, Geneva, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> von Einsiedel, S., 'Non-Military Protection of Civilians in UN Peace Operations: Experiences and Lessons', United Nations University, Tokyo, 2015.



Borno State, Nigeria

This may include: representatives of the peacekeeping or political mission, UNICEF, OCHA, UNHCR, UNOHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women. The CTFMR is co-chaired by the highest UN authority in the country (whether that be the SRSG or RC/HC) and the UNICEF Representative.<sup>14</sup>

Collecting and reporting information on rape and other forms of sexual violence remains a significant challenge for many MRM taskforces and MARA working groups.<sup>15</sup> As co-lead of the CTFMR, UNICEF plays a key role in ensuring good coordination and linkages between the CTFMR, the GBV and CP sub-clusters/working groups, and MARA working groups. UNICEF also has a responsibility to promote ethical, safe, child- and survivor-centred processes and practices within the MRM – one strategy for addressing the challenge of collecting and reporting sexual violence-related information.

The MRM and MARA are expected to capitalize and build on existing human rights, child protection and GBV coordination

mechanisms and databases established by UN peacekeeping missions and within the humanitarian cluster system. Particular emphasis should be placed on collaboration and coordination between peacekeeping and humanitarian actors, and such collaboration should be undertaken in a manner consistent with humanitarian principles.<sup>16</sup>

### Tools

See **Kit 3.3: Programming – Building Accountability.**

### Resources

- ▶ **Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict: Guidelines and Field Manual**  
*UN Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, DPKO and UNICEF (2014)*  
<[https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM\\_Guidelines\\_-\\_5\\_June\\_20141.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM_Guidelines_-_5_June_20141.pdf)>
- ▶ **Getting It Done and Doing It Right: A global study on the United Nations-led monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict**  
*Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (2008)*  
<<http://watchlist.org/publications/global-study-on-the-implementation-of-the-un-led-monitoring-and-reporting-mechanism-mrm/>>
- ▶ **Provisional Guidance Note: Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010) On Women, Peace and Security**  
*UN Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2011)*  
<[www.refworld.org/docid/4e23ed5d2.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e23ed5d2.html)>

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and United Nations Children's Fund, *Guidelines on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and United Nations Children's Fund, *Global Good Practices Study: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence, 'Provisional Guidance Note: Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010) On Women, Peace and Security', UN Action, New York, 2011.

## Tips for coordinating with other actors

As an agency with a responsibility for cluster leadership in a number of sectors – and one that plays a key role in monitoring and reporting sexual violence in armed conflict and promoting accountability for PSEA – UNICEF is well-positioned to promote effective interactions and complementarity between different stakeholders to improve the protection and rights of girls and women. COs can help build and sustain effective engagement between GBV coordination bodies and other humanitarian, peace and security actors in the following ways:

- a) **Agree on the coordination architecture and relationships; and**
- b) **Provide technical support and guidance on ethical, safe, and child- and survivor-centred principles of GBV coordination.**

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### a) Agree on coordination architecture and relationships

- ✓ Identify each mechanism/group with a mandate for some aspect of GBV prevention and response, including humanitarian cluster/sectors, PSEA Networks, the MRM task force, the MARA working group, and other UN political or peace-keeping mission bodies, such as civ-mil coordination mechanisms.
- ✓ Clarify, document and share information about the mandate and scope of operations of each mechanism/group.
- ✓ Agree on the coordination architecture, relationships, and methods of communication and collaboration between the GBV sub-cluster/working group and each of the other groups. For instance, bring MARA, MRM, GBV and CP sub-cluster/working group lead agencies together to define the coordination architecture, linkages, principles and procedures for interaction on CRSV monitoring and response.

- ✓ Identify a Focal Point within the GBV sub-cluster for each of the other issues/mechanisms – for example, a Focal Point for CRSV, MARA or MRM.
- ✓ Where there are UN peacekeeping missions, develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for coordination between humanitarian and UN peacekeeping missions that set out mandates and processes for collaboration on GBV/CRSV information sharing, joint assessment and planning for protection of civilians.

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### b) Provide technical support and guidance on ethical, safe, and child- and survivor-centred principles of GBV coordination

- ✓ Sensitize other actors – including other clusters/sectors, human rights monitors and organizations, and civilian and military personnel within UN missions – on survivor-centred principles and practices in monitoring and reporting GBV, including CRSV.
- ✓ Provide training to MRM, MARA, PSEA and civ-mil protection of civilian mechanisms to ensure all information collection and sharing, service delivery, and accountability processes are premised on survivors' rights to safety, confidentiality and self-determination.
- ✓ Support the development of guidance for operationalizing ethical and safe survivor-centred principles within MRM and MARA monitoring, including special considerations for children. Guidance must explicitly address:
  - Safety and confidentiality of all individuals who provide information about sexual violence and other forms of GBV to UN-led monitoring mechanisms;
  - Self-determination and informed consent regarding information sharing; and
  - The best interests of the child in all monitoring procedures and practices.



Dar'a, Syria

## Coordinating with others checklist

The following is a checklist detailing essential actions for effective GBV coordination with others.

### Checklist for coordinating with others

Inter-agency coordination architecture is agreed upon with clearly defined mandates, areas of collaboration and communication protocols between the GBV sub-cluster and different groups in place.

CRSV, PSEA, MARA, MRM and cluster liaison Focal Points are in place within the GBV sub-cluster/working group.

SOPs are in place for civil-military engagement and coordination on CRSV.

Other actors are sensitized on survivor-centred principles and practices when collecting and sharing GBV-related information and engaging with survivors.

Training is offered to MRM, MARA, PSEA and civ-mil protection of civilian mechanisms on survivors' rights, ethics and safety.

# Info Sheets – GBV Coordination in Emergencies



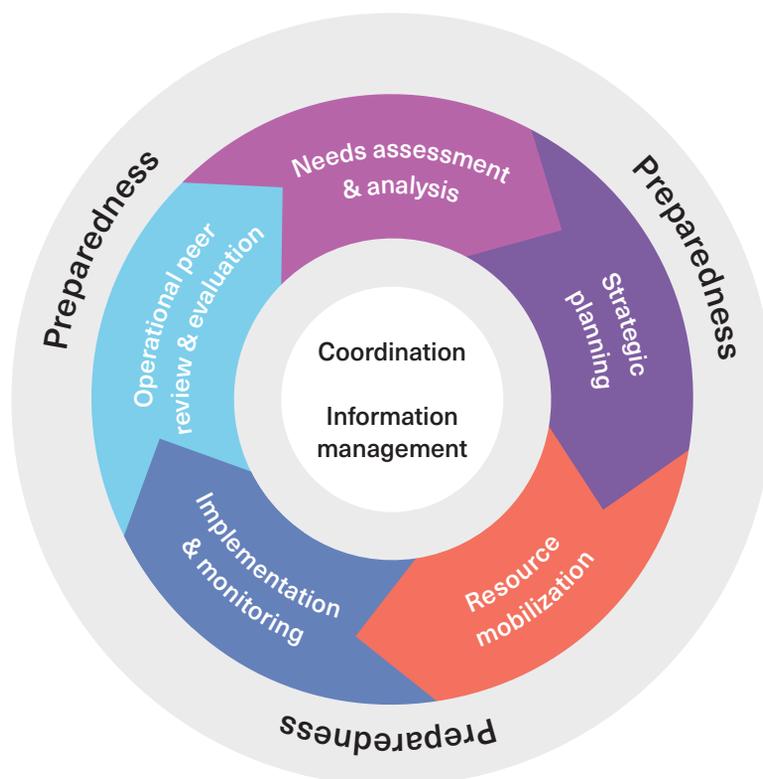
## The Humanitarian Programming Cycle

Source: Humanitarian Response Info, *Humanitarian Programme Cycle*, <[www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space)>, accessed 27 March 2017.

The humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. It consists of five elements coordinated in a seamless manner, with one step logically building on the previous and leading to the next. Successful implementation of the humanitarian programme cycle is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management.

The HPC elements are as follows:

1. Needs assessment and analysis
2. Strategic response planning
3. Resource mobilization
4. Implementation and monitoring
5. Operational review and evaluation





# UNHCR-Led Coordination

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model', 2013.<sup>1</sup>

## Standard elements of the refugee coordination model

The Refugee Coordination Model explains and standardizes UNHCR's best practices from the field. It is predicated on the primary responsibility of States to protect refugees, and is determined, largely, by the capacities and approaches of the host Government. Responses are, whenever possible, led by the host Government and build on the resources of refugees and the communities in which they live.

The Refugee Coordination Model ensures inclusiveness, predictability and transparency, as well as clear lines of accountability. It aims to be light, operations-focused and impact-oriented. The standard elements are:

- Direct advocacy on all international protection matters with the host Government by the UNHCR Representative.
- Strategic planning for all phases of the response led by the Representative with operational partners in the development of a protection and solutions strategy, including development actors.
- An inclusive Refugee Consultation Forum at national level, co-chaired by the Government (wherever possible) and the Representative, on the overall refugee response.
- A UNHCR Refugee Coordinator to lead and coordinate a multi-sectorial response and ensure participation of sector-leads and all players at the field level, supported by a Multi-sector Operations Team with expertise and capacity to facilitate needs assessment, planning, monitoring, reporting and information management across all sectors.
- UNHCR-led Refugee Protection Working Group responsible for the coordination of protection services and for mainstreaming protection throughout other operational sectors.
- Service-delivery sectors, led by Government line ministries and/or (co)chaired by partners and/or UNHCR. Sectors are intended to connect to Government-led development mechanisms, if feasible.
- Arrangements on sector coordination and delivery with multiple potential partners, to ensure a predictable response. Agencies may wish to draw upon Global Cluster resources to support the delivery of services.

## Interfacing with the cluster system

The Refugee Coordination Model is designed to adapt to situations where cluster structures exist, in order to harmonize approaches and reduce duplication. It expands or contracts depending on the characteristics of the situation. Regardless of the form the Refugee Coordination Model takes, UNHCR's mandate, responsibilities and accountabilities remain unchanged. In order to exercise his international protection, assistance and durable solutions mandate, combined with his supervisory responsibility, the High Commissioner will maintain a direct line of communication, through his Representative, with the Government. In an operational context, UNHCR maintains coordination and oversight structures that allow it to fulfil

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <[www.unhcr.org/53679e2c9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/53679e2c9.html)>.

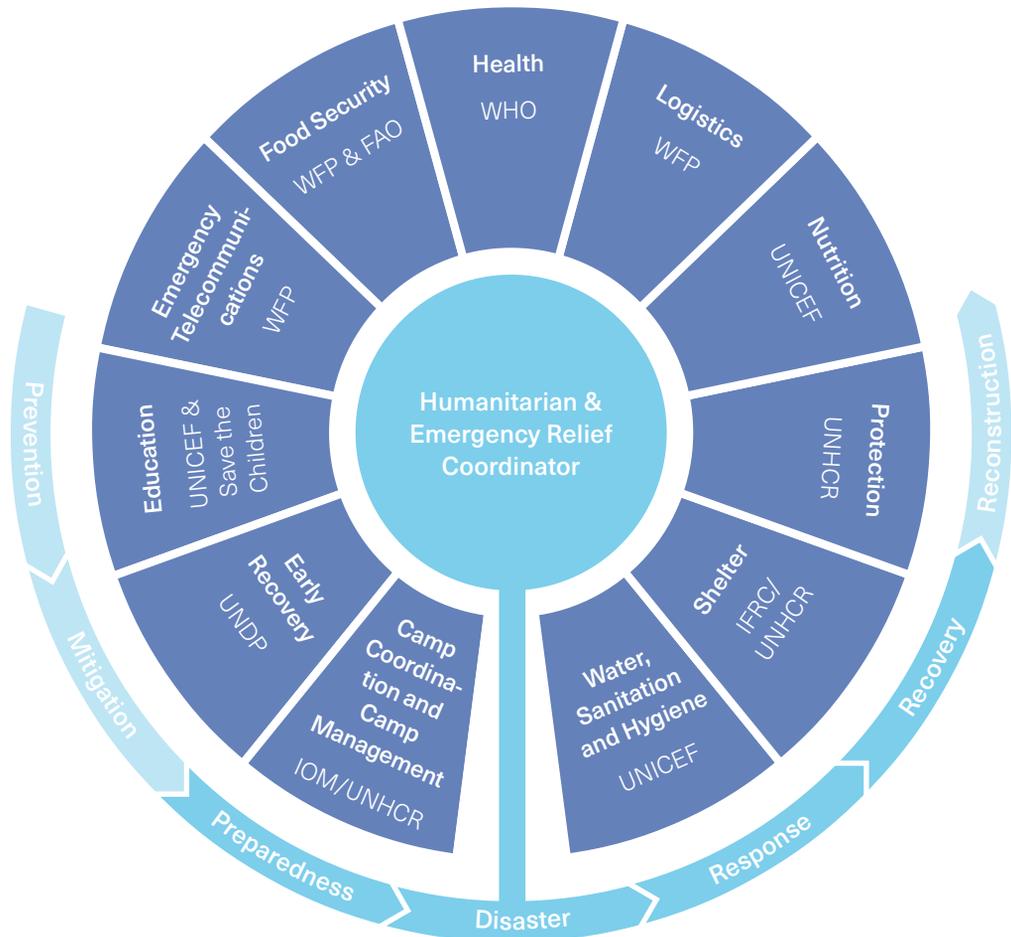
its ultimate accountability for ensuring the international protection and delivery of services to refugees. The principle underpinning UNHCR's approach in mixed situations is that refugee operations should form an integral part of any overall humanitarian response, while at the same time retaining the flexibility to stand alone for international protection and accountability purposes. There are six primary points of interface between the Refugee Coordination Model and the cluster system:

- In all situations, at the leadership level the UNHCR Representative maintains responsibility for advocacy with the host Government and engages closely with the RC/HC. As an active member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), this includes keeping the HCT informed on the refugee operation on a regular basis.
- The Representative will lead the refugee-specific strategic planning exercise with partners, drawing on the HCT, including OCHA, to ensure coherence with the broader humanitarian response.
- The Humanitarian Country Team will also form part of the broader consultation forum on the overall refugee response.
- The Refugee Coordinator and Multi-sector Operations Team will ensure effective coordination through information exchange with inter-cluster coordination forums, support for the implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and protection mainstreaming across clusters/sectors.
- The Protection Working Group will continue to be convened and will harmonize approaches with the Protection cluster where applicable.
- Arrangements will be made with humanitarian partners to facilitate service delivery to refugees under the cluster capacity and to ensure that standards are met.



# The Cluster Approach

Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on the Cluster Approach and the Global Cluster Coordinators' Group, 'Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level', IASC, 2015.<sup>1</sup>



IASC clusters are formally activated clusters created when existing coordination mechanisms are overwhelmed or constrained in their ability to respond to identified needs in line with humanitarian principles.

A formally activated cluster has specific characteristics and accountabilities. It is accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) through the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) as well as to national authorities and to people affected by the crisis.

IASC clusters are a temporary coordination solution and efforts should be made as soon as appropriate and possible to hand over coordination to the relevant authorities.

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <[https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/cluster\\_coordination\\_reference\\_module\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/cluster_coordination_reference_module_2015_final.pdf)>.

Under the Transformative Agenda, IASC Principals agreed that activation of clusters must be more strategic, less automatic, and time limited. HCs should only recommend the activation of clusters when there is an identified gap in the enabling environment warranting their activation.

Formal activation of clusters may be difficult in circumstances where Government capacity is constrained. In such contexts, different ways of augmenting coordination and response capacity may need to be found, underpinned by the principles of the cluster approach.

To ensure that clusters continue to operate only while they are strictly needed, plans to deactivate and transition clusters should be prepared as soon as possible after activation. Building the capacity of local partners and Government should be an objective from the outset. The criteria for cluster activation are met when:

1. Response and coordination gaps exist due to a sharp deterioration or significant change in the humanitarian situation.
2. Existing national response or coordination capacity is unable to meet needs in a manner that respects humanitarian principles, due to the scale of need, the number of actors involved, the need for a more complex multi-sectoral approach, or other constraints on the ability to respond or apply humanitarian principles).

The six core functions of a cluster at country level are:

1. To support service delivery
2. To inform the HC/HCT's strategic decision-making
3. To plan and implement cluster strategies
4. To monitor and evaluate performance
5. To build national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning
6. To support robust advocacy



# UNICEF and Cluster Management at Country Level

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Fact Sheet: Cluster Management at Country Level', UNICEF, 2012.<sup>1</sup>

## What is UNICEF's commitment?

Under the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action<sup>2</sup> (CCC's), UNICEF is committed to ensuring there is an effective coordination mechanism operational in WASH, nutrition, education, child protection and gender-based violence. This does not mean UNICEF is obliged to do the coordination itself and/or have the lead in providing support to this coordination.

## What is UNICEF's role?

The form of this sectoral coordination of humanitarian assistance may be the establishment of a humanitarian cluster or another sectoral coordination mechanism as appropriate. As a member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), UNICEF will take part in the assessment of existing coordination mechanisms at the onset of an emergency to determine whether clusters (and if so which) should be activated by the ERC. If and when a cluster is activated, UNICEF does not have an obligation to coordinate clusters at country level for which it is cluster lead globally. However, UNICEF will usually be expected to take on country level cluster leadership (in WASH, nutrition, education (co-lead), child protection (sub-cluster)), and if the office has capacity or is best placed to acquire this capacity, it should take on this role. This role is allocated by the Humanitarian Country Team when clusters are activated in a given emergency context.

## What are cluster coordinator reporting lines?

Cluster coordinators report to the UNICEF Country Representative, since UNICEF is accountable for the performance of the cluster coordination it has assumed the responsibility for at country level. The cluster coordinator is also expected to have frequent direct interaction with the Humanitarian Coordinator. The Representative may delegate day-to-day reporting of the cluster coordination to other staff members including the Deputy Representative or the Programme Chief. However, it is critical that the supervisor in question understands that the cluster coordinator coordinates the entire sector, not only fields that are of interest to UNICEF. For example, areas like support to the elderly also fall within the realm of the cluster coordinator of a given sector, even though this is outside of UNICEF's mandate and the focus of the CCCs.

## What is the role of the national authorities?

The role of national authorities varies depending on the setting. Cluster coordination is a mechanism for the Humanitarian Country Team to improve its own coordination and gap filling. Cluster coordination does not replace national coordination structures, but supplements these. In some cases, it may be appropriate to have national authorities co-chair the clusters. In settings where national authorities are normatively committed to the aims of humanitarian actors, and have the capacity to coordinate sectoral response, it may be unnecessary to activate the cluster mechanism.

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <[www.unicefinemergencies.com/downloads/edk/docs/On%20the%20Plane\\_Cluster%20Approach%20Aug%202012.pdf](http://www.unicefinemergencies.com/downloads/edk/docs/On%20the%20Plane_Cluster%20Approach%20Aug%202012.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> See <[www.unicef.org/publications/files/CCC\\_042010.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CCC_042010.pdf)>.

## What is double hatting?

'Double hatting' is when UNICEF programme staff, in addition to their UNICEF responsibilities, also function as cluster coordinators. This may create a conflict of interest, especially in situations where the cluster coordinator has significant influence on sector funding. Double hatting is also problematic because not all programme staff may be well-suited to coordinate clusters. Furthermore, there is a risk that UNICEF staff may neglect UNICEF programmes to fulfil their cluster responsibilities, and poorly functioning clusters will also take up senior management time. When UNICEF coordinates a cluster at country level, there will often be a mix of dedicated cluster coordinators at capital level, and double-hatted coordinators at regional/province level. Within IASC policy, double hatting is permitted, although it is discouraged. UNICEF is committed to deploying dedicated cluster coordinator in major emergencies, but reserves the right to double hat where it is deemed appropriate and still results in effective coordination. However, when funding allows it, having dedicated cluster coordinators is usually a good investment.

## How is funding of cluster coordinators done?

It is essential to make cluster coordination costs visible, whether coordinators are single-hatted or double-hatted. Cluster coordination costs should be as visible as possible in funding proposals. Cluster coordination costs should be included in the CAP where applicable, including separate projects where relevant. Cluster coordination costs can also be funded from the CERF. UNICEF Emergency Programme Funds (EPF) – managed by EMOPS – can also be used (although this must be reimbursed). Information management: Information management is part of the IASC-approved terms of references of the country-level cluster coordinator. Given that this represents a considerable amount of work and a specialized expertise, in practice many cluster lead agencies have taken to deploying dedicated IM capacity for the clusters where they lead. Cluster lead agencies at the country level are not formally obliged to do this, however UNICEF experience in recent emergencies shows that this is a worthwhile investment which helps us deliver effective coordination. UNICEF Representatives should consider fostering interaction between cluster IM and UNICEF M&E capacity as this can serve to strengthen response by UNICEF and the cluster as a whole.

## What is the provider of last resort (POLR)?

When UNICEF takes on country cluster leadership, it becomes POLR in the respective sector. "The 'provider of last resort' is a fundamental tenet of the cluster approach and an essential accountability of the cluster lead agency. The country cluster lead agency is responsible for ensuring that cluster members agree on operational strategy and clearly defined joint results, identify gaps, and prioritize and mobilize capacities to meet these gaps. Where effective response is prevented by lack of funding, access or acceptable security conditions, the country cluster lead agency as POLR, must be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fulfill critical gaps identified by the cluster and reflected in the HC-led HCT Strategic Response Plan.



# Principles and Concepts for Civil-Military Coordination

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies', UNOCHA, New York, 2008, pp. 15–20.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Humanity, neutrality and impartiality

Any civil-military coordination must serve the prime humanitarian principle of *humanity* – i.e. human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. In determining whether and to what extent humanitarian agencies should coordinate with military forces, one must be mindful of the potential consequences of too close an affiliation with the military or even the perception of such affiliation, especially as these could jeopardize the humanitarian principles of *neutrality* and *impartiality*. However, the key humanitarian objective of providing protection and assistance to populations in need may at times necessitate a pragmatic approach, which might include civil-military coordination.

## 2. Humanitarian access to vulnerable populations

Humanitarian agencies must maintain their ability to obtain *access* to all vulnerable populations in all areas of the complex emergency in question and to negotiate such access with all parties to the conflict. Particular care must also be taken to ensure the sustainability of access. Coordination with the military should be considered to the extent that it facilitates, secures and sustains, not hinders, humanitarian access.

## 3. Perception of humanitarian action

The delivery of humanitarian assistance to all populations in need must be *neutral* and *impartial* – it must come without political or military conditions and humanitarian staff must not take sides in disputes or political positions. This will have a bearing on the *credibility* and *independence* of humanitarian efforts in general. Any civil-military coordination must also be mindful not to jeopardize the longstanding local network and trust that humanitarian agencies have created and maintained.

## 4. Needs-based assistance free of discrimination

Humanitarian assistance must be provided on the *basis of needs* of those affected by the particular complex emergency, taking into account the local capacity already in place to meet those needs. The assessment of such needs must be independent and humanitarian assistance must be given without adverse discrimination of any kind, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex/gender, religion, social status, nationality or political affiliation of the recipients. It must be provided in an equitable manner to all populations in need.

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Civil-Military%20Guidelines%20and%20Reference,UN-IASC,%2021%20Oct%2008,English.pdf>>.

## 5. Civilian-military distinction in humanitarian action

At all times, a clear *distinction* must be maintained between combatants and non-combatants – i.e., between those actively engaged in hostilities, and civilians and others who do not or no longer directly participate in the armed conflict (including the sick, wounded, prisoners of war and ex-combatants who are demobilised). International humanitarian law protects non-combatants by providing immunity from attack. Thus, humanitarian workers must never present themselves or their work as part of a military operation, and military personnel must refrain from presenting themselves as civilian humanitarian workers.

## 6. Operational independence of humanitarian action

In any civil-military coordination humanitarian actors must retain the lead role in undertaking and directing humanitarian activities. The *independence* of humanitarian action and decision-making must be preserved both at the operational and policy levels at all times. Humanitarian organizations must not implement tasks on behalf of the military nor represent or implement their policies. Basic requisites such as freedom of movement for humanitarian staff, freedom to conduct independent assessments, freedom of selection of staff, freedom to identify beneficiaries of assistance based on their needs, or free flow of communications between humanitarian agencies as well as with the media, must not be impeded.

## 7. Security of humanitarian personnel

Any perception that humanitarian actors may have become affiliated with the military forces within a specific situation could impact negatively on the security of humanitarian staff and their ability to access vulnerable populations. However, humanitarian actors operating within an emergency situation must identify the most expeditious, effective and secure approach to ensure the delivery of vital assistance to vulnerable target populations. This approach must be balanced against the primary concern for ensuring staff safety, and therein a consideration of any real or perceived affiliation with the military. The decision to seek military-based security for humanitarian workers should be viewed as a *last resort* option when other staff security mechanisms are unavailable, inadequate or inappropriate.

## 8. Do no harm

Considerations on civil-military coordination must be guided by a commitment to '*do no harm*'. Humanitarian agencies must ensure at the policy and operational levels that any potential civil-military coordination will not contribute to further the conflict, nor harm or endanger the beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance.

## 9. Respect for international legal instruments

Both humanitarian and military actors must respect international humanitarian law as well as other international norms and regulations, including human rights instruments.

## 10. Respect for culture and custom

Respect and sensitivities must be maintained for the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries where humanitarian activities are carried out. Where possible and to the extent feasible, ways shall be found to involve the intended beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance and/or local personnel in the design, management and implementation of assistance, including in civil-military coordination.

## 11. Consent of parties to the conflict

The risk of compromising humanitarian operations by cooperating with the military might be reduced if all parties to the conflict recognize, agree or acknowledge in advance that humanitarian activities might necessitate civil-military coordination in certain exceptional circumstances.

## 12. Option of last resort

Use of military assets, armed escorts, joint humanitarian-military operations and any other actions involving visible interaction with the military must be the option of *last resort*. Such actions may take place only where there is no comparable civilian alternative and only the use of military support can meet a critical humanitarian need.

## 13. Avoid reliance on the military

Humanitarian agencies must avoid becoming dependent on resources or support provided by the military. Any resources or support provided by the military should be, at its onset, clearly limited in time and scale and present an exit strategy element that defines clearly how the function it undertakes could, in the future, be undertaken by civilian personnel/means. Resources provided by the military are often only temporarily available and when higher priority military missions emerge, such support may be recalled at short notice and without any substitute support.



# Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1960

Sources: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict website: <<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>>; and Peacewomen website: <[www.peacewomen.org/SCR-1960](http://www.peacewomen.org/SCR-1960)>.

## UN Security Council Resolution 1612 of 2005

**UN Security Council Resolution 1612**, adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on July 26th 2005, was a groundbreaking development in the children and armed conflict agenda. Following the steps of UN Security Council Resolution 1539 of 2004, it established an unprecedented UN-led monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) to systematically document and report on the six grave violations against children in armed conflict. These include:

1. Killing and maiming of children
2. Recruiting and using child soldiers
3. Attacks against schools or hospitals
4. Rape or other grave sexual violence against children
5. Abduction of children
6. Denial of humanitarian access for children

## Security Council Resolution 1960 of 2010

In December 2010, noting that sexual violence during armed conflict remains systematic, rampant, and widespread, the Security Council unanimously adopted a new resolution, Resolution 1960 (2010). This resolution creates institutional tools and teeth to combat impunity and outlines specific steps needed for both the prevention of and protection from sexual violence in conflict. The new "naming and shaming," listing mechanism mandated in the Resolution is a step forward in bringing justice for victims and a recognition that sexual violence is a serious violation of human rights and international law.

**SCR 1960** outlines specific steps for the prevention of and protection from sexual violence in conflict, including the establishment of standardized monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements (MARA).

The purpose of the MARA is to provide systematic, timely, reliable, and objective information on conflict-related sexual violence to the Security Council that will help reduce the risk of sexual violence and improve assistance to survivors. It will also serve to collect:

- Information on patterns and trends of sexual violence in situations of conflict, post-conflict and other situations of concern to the UN Secretary-General;
- Detailed information on parties to conflict credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for rape and other forms of conflict-related sexual violence – for the purpose of listing in the UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council.

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