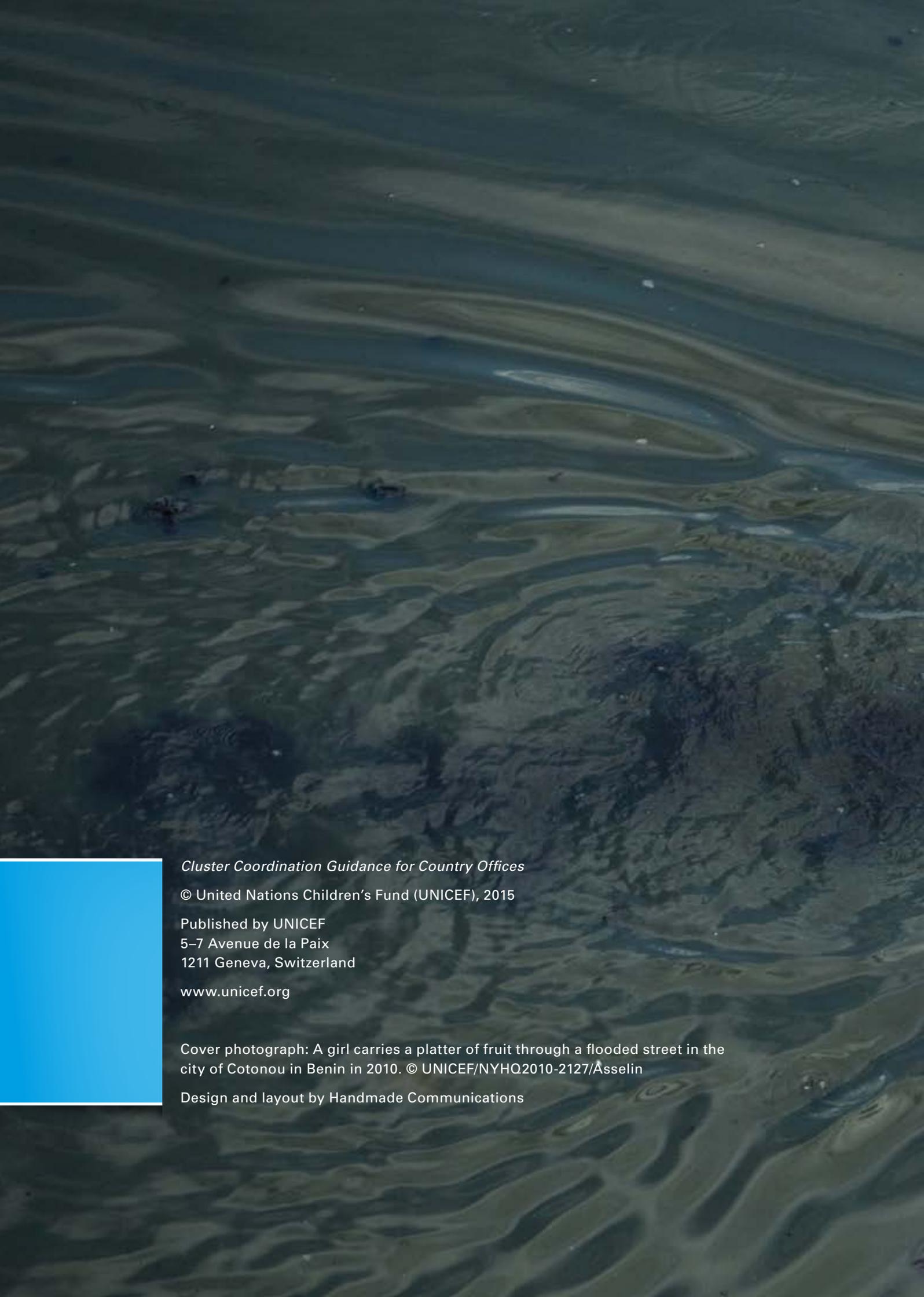


# Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices

unite for  
children

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*Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices*

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Cover photograph: A girl carries a platter of fruit through a flooded street in the city of Cotonou in Benin in 2010. © UNICEF/NYHQ2010-2127/Asselin

Design and layout by Handmade Communications

# Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices

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# Contents

Haiti, 2010. A baby girl lies atop a pile of laundry while her mother does washing nearby. The family lost their home during the 7.3 magnitude earthquake that devastated the country in 2010.



<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
The cluster approach	7
Humanitarian country team – responsibilities and composition	7
Purpose and structure of the guidance document	9
<b>Summary</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Part One: The cluster approach – how it works and UNICEF country representative responsibilities** **31**

1.1	Cluster and sector coordination (CCRM Section 1)	31
1.2	Cluster activation (CCRM Section 2)	33
1.2.1	Selection of CLAs	33
1.3	Cluster transition and deactivation (CCRM Section 3)	33
1.4	Cluster functions (CCRM Section 4)	35
1.4.1	Cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations	39
1.4.2	Provider of last resort	46
1.5	Inter-cluster coordination (CCRM Section 5)	46
1.5.1	Inter-cluster coordination	46
1.5.2	Relationship and flow of information between the HCT and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms	47
1.6	Preparedness (CCRM Section 6)	48
1.7	Cluster management arrangements (CCRM Section 7)	50
1.8	Minimum commitments for participation in clusters (CCRM Section 8)	52
1.9	Sub-national coordination (CCRM Section 9)	53
1.10	Sharing leadership (CCRM Section 10)	54
1.10.1	Cluster co-leadership costs	55
1.10.2	Co-leadership within the context of the AORs	56
1.10.3	Co-leadership in education	56
1.11	Monitoring cluster coordination (CCRM Section 11)	57

## **Part Two: The cluster approach – UNICEF country office responsibilities** **59**

2.1	Human resource mobilization for UNICEF-led clusters and AORs	59
2.1.1	The concept of 'double-hatting'	65
2.1.2	The concept of neutrality of the cluster coordinators	66
2.2	UNICEF line management of cluster and AOR coordinators	66
2.2.1	Decision on line management of cluster and AOR coordinators	68
2.2.2	UNICEF-led cluster-manager meetings	68
2.2.3	Monitoring of cluster performance and cluster function	69
2.2.4	The UNICEF representative's attendance at cluster and AOR coordination meetings	69
2.2.5	The UNICEF representative representing the clusters and AORs in the HCT	70
2.2.6	The UNICEF representative representing clusters and AORs at UNICEF emergency management team conference calls	70

2.3	UNICEF programmes working with clusters	70
2.3.1	Advantages of well-functioning clusters to UNICEF	70
2.3.2	UNICEF programme section participation in the cluster	71
2.3.3	Cluster and AOR coordinator participation in section meetings	72
2.3.4	Programme and cluster/AOR staff collaboration	72
2.4	UNICEF operational and administrative support for clusters	73
2.5	UNICEF cluster meetings	74

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## **Annex One: Timeline** **76**

---

## **Annex Two: Reference materials** **79**

---

### **Tables**

---

Table 1:	Comparison of characteristics and accountabilities of clusters and sectors	32
Table 2:	Cluster and AOR functions – respective responsibilities matrix	36
Table 3:	Responsibility for preparedness in line with the ERP approach	49
Table 4:	Options for sourcing surge/temporary staff for clusters and AORs	62
Table 5:	Cluster and AOR coordinator reporting lines used by UNICEF	67

### **Figure**

---

Figure 1:	Incorporating cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations into the HPC – a people-centred approach	45
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# Acronyms

<b>AOR</b>	area of responsibility
<b>CAAP</b>	Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations
<b>CCCs</b>	Core Commitments for Children
<b>CCPM</b>	cluster coordination performance monitoring
<b>CCRM</b>	Cluster Coordination Reference Module
<b>CLA</b>	cluster lead agency
<b>EMOPS</b>	Office of Emergency Programmes
<b>ERP</b>	Emergency Response Preparedness
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>GCCU</b>	Global Cluster Coordinating Unit
<b>GenCap</b>	Gender Standby Capacity Project
<b>HAP</b>	UNICEF Humanitarian Action Plan
<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>HC</b>	humanitarian coordinator
<b>HCT</b>	humanitarian country team
<b>HPC</b>	humanitarian programme cycle
<b>HPM</b>	humanitarian performance monitoring
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>LOU</b>	letter of understanding
<b>MoRES</b>	Monitoring Results for Equity Systems
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>POLR</b>	provider of last resort
<b>ProCap</b>	Protection Capacity Project
<b>SRP</b>	strategic response plan
<b>TOR</b>	terms of reference
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WASH</b>	water, sanitation and hygiene



# INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

## The cluster approach

**T**he cluster approach was adopted to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian responses. At country level, it establishes a system for leadership and accountability of the international humanitarian response under the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator (HC). It makes clear the respective roles and responsibilities of the various agencies and provides a framework for effective partnership among international humanitarian actors, host governments, local authorities, local civil society agencies and affected populations.

The cluster approach is applied in relation to internally displaced populations and local populations affected by rapid onset or chronic emergencies, in agreement with governments. Responsibility for coordination of a humanitarian response in relation to refugees (both within and outside camps) remains within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and is not part of the cluster approach.

Globally, UNICEF is responsible for leading/co-leading three clusters: water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition and education (co-led with Save the Children) and two areas of responsibility (AORs): child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) (co-led with the United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA), under the protection cluster. UNICEF commitment to coordination in humanitarian action is articulated under UNICEF Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action (Section 1.12, Interagency Humanitarian Reform).<sup>1</sup> During the recent UNICEF Strengthening Humanitarian Action initiative, it was agreed that accountabilities under the Transformative Agenda will be added as an annex to the CCCs.<sup>2</sup>

### Humanitarian country team – responsibilities and composition

Under the leadership of the HC, the humanitarian country team (HCT) is the centrepiece of the humanitarian coordination architecture. Reporting directly to the emergency relief coordinator, the HC is ultimately responsible for the overall response and accountable to the populations in need and to the emergency relief coordinator. Where a separate HC position has not been established, the resident coordinator is accountable for the performance of humanitarian coordination functions.<sup>3</sup>

The Transformative Agenda affirms that international coordination arrangements should adapt to the operational context and should support national coordination efforts. It also affirms empowered leadership, with HCs, resident coordinators and HCTs making decisions at country level in dialogue with national authorities.<sup>4</sup>

### HCT responsibilities

HCT responsibilities include:

- Agreeing on strategic issues related to humanitarian action in-country, including setting and promoting common objectives and priorities, developing strategic plans, agreeing on the establishment of clusters and designation of cluster lead agencies (CLAs), providing guidance

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF, *Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action*, May 2010 (page 10).

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, *Strengthening Humanitarian Action Initiative*, September 2014 (Annexes).

<sup>3</sup> IASC, *Handbook for RCs and HCs on Emergency Preparedness and Response*, 2010 (page 5).

<sup>4</sup> IASC, *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*, June 2014 (page 3).

Opposite: Philippines, 2013. These sisters, with their family, were lucky to survive when Typhoon Haiyan hit their village.

## INTRODUCTION



Palestine, 2015. These girls were among the children who were caught up in the seven weeks of violence that engulfed Gaza during July and August 2014.

to CLAs, activating resource mobilization mechanisms and advising the HC on allocation of in-country resources;

- Agreeing on common policies and strategies related to in-country humanitarian action;
- Promoting adherence to humanitarian principles, the Principles of Partnership<sup>5</sup> and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) policies and guidance; and
- Promoting actions that specifically improve accountability to affected populations as per IASC *Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations* (CAAP)<sup>6</sup> and the related *Operational Framework*.

### **HCT composition**

HCTs comprise organizations that undertake humanitarian action in-country, and that commit to participate in coordination arrangements, including United Nations agencies, the International Organization for Migration, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and (subject to mandate) components of the relevant line ministries.

5 Principles of Partnership: equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity, as defined in the statement of commitment available at <[www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org](http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org)>.

6 The CAAP refer to leadership and governance, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation, and design, monitoring and evaluation. See Revised Action Points, IASC Principals' Meeting, 13 December 2011.

- The size of an HCT is limited, to allow for effective decision-making.
- Members of the HCT are represented at the highest level – country representative or equivalent.
- Representatives of CLAs have a dual role, representing the cluster(s) in addition to their own organization.
- As UNICEF is a global CLA for three clusters and two AORs, and a major agency supporting humanitarian response programming, the UNICEF representative will be a member of the HCT.

The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to proactively engage in HCT discussions and decision-making in all phases of the response, representing both the interests of UNICEF as an organization and the interests of the three clusters and two AORs (where UNICEF is designated to represent these clusters and AORs in-country).

See IASC *Guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams*<sup>7</sup> for a more detailed description of HCT purpose, establishment, responsibilities, composition, chairmanship, modus operandi and interface with other in-country coordination mechanisms.

### Purpose and structure of the guidance document

This document has been developed to assist UNICEF country offices to better fulfil CLA responsibilities in level 3 (L3) and other emergencies, with reference to relevant IASC protocols and guidance<sup>8</sup> and relevant internal UNICEF reviews and evaluations.<sup>9</sup> This document should be used in conjunction with and to augment other reference materials.

The functions and responsibilities of the focal point agencies for AORs under the protection cluster are identical to the functions and responsibilities of the CLA for clusters.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, UNICEF needs to ensure the same level of investment and support for AORs as is given to clusters.

This document comprises:

- **Summary:** This chapter explains key responsibilities of UNICEF country representatives and country offices in supporting cluster and area of responsibility coordination functions. For more detail, refer to Parts One and Two.
- **Part One: The cluster approach – how it works, and UNICEF country representative responsibilities.** This part has been developed to align with the IASC *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level (CCRM)*<sup>11</sup> to facilitate ease of cross-referencing.
- **Part Two: The cluster approach – UNICEF country office responsibilities.**

7 IASC, *Operational Guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams*, November 2009.

8 See Annex Two: Reference materials for a list of relevant IASC documents.

9 Avenir Analytics, *Evaluation of UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action (CLARE Report)*, June 2013. UNICEF, 'Rapid Response Team Retreat', main recommendations, June 2013. UNICEF, *Real Time Evaluation of UNICEF Humanitarian Response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines*, draft report, May 2014. UNICEF, *Rapid Response Team Country Office Report*, 2014.

10 IASC, *Handbook for RCs and HCs on Emergency Preparedness and Response*, 2010 (page 41).

11 IASC, *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*, final draft, June 2014.



# SUMMARY



# Summary

## Key responsibilities of UNICEF country representatives and country offices to support cluster and area of responsibility coordination functions

**A**s UNICEF is a global CLA for three clusters and two AORs, and a major agency supporting humanitarian response programming, the UNICEF representative will be a member of the HCT.

As an HCT member, the UNICEF representative has a responsibility to proactively engage in HCT discussions and decision-making in all phases of the emergency response, representing both the interests of UNICEF as an organization and the interests of the three clusters and two AORs it leads.

The functions and responsibilities of the focal point agencies for AORs under the protection cluster are identical to the functions and responsibilities of the CLAs for clusters.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, UNICEF needs to ensure the same level of investment and support for AORs as is given to clusters.

### Cluster activation

The decision to activate clusters and AORs is made by the HCT in consultation with national partners and is based on analysis of the context, including the scale of the humanitarian needs and the capacity of existing coordination structures on the ground.

#### The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:

- Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on the activation of clusters and AORs in-country and alert the relevant global cluster coordinators; and
- Begin a process of dialogue with the Global Cluster Coordinating Unit (GCCU) for guidance or support.

### Selection of CLAs

Selection of CLAs generally mirrors global lead and co-lead arrangements, although this is not always the case. In a situation where UNICEF does not have operational programmes in the sector for which clusters or AORs will be established, the country office needs to seriously consider its position and realistic ability to adequately fulfil the coordination function for the relevant cluster/AOR, in both the short and the longer term. Depending on the context, the UNICEF representative and the HCT may decide that:

- Another organization is better placed to take full CLA responsibility for the cluster/AOR, in which case the UNICEF representative will facilitate linkages with the relevant global cluster coordinator;
- UNICEF shares CLA responsibility with another organization (see Section 1.10 on shared leadership); or
- Another organization takes on CLA responsibility in the short term and UNICEF agrees to scale up and take on CLA responsibility in the longer term.

Opposite: Pakistan, 2011. This girl, photographed in a camp in Hyderabad, belongs to a community that was displaced by flood waters, caused by heavy monsoon rains.

<sup>12</sup> IASC, *Handbook for RCs and HCs on Emergency Preparedness and Response*, 2010 (page 41).

## SUMMARY

### Cluster transition and deactivation

Cluster transition refers to the process through which the transfer of leadership and accountabilities is planned and implemented, leading to deactivation.

#### The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:

- Proactively engage in HCT discussion on transition/deactivation of clusters and AORs, and in the review of the existing coordination architecture;
- Ensure the GCCU is informed about planned reviews and possible re-structuring of the coordination mechanisms, and that relevant global cluster coordinators are actively engaged in the discussion on review of cluster architecture and the proposed way forward;
- Ensure that UNICEF-led and co-led clusters and AORs develop realistic and viable plans, with benchmarks for transition/deactivation of clusters and AORs, and advocate with relevant government sectors on ensuring continued optimal coordination through a sector working group; and
- When merging of UNICEF-led clusters or AORs is proposed following a coordination architecture review, ensure that realistic and viable plans, with benchmarks for merging of clusters and AORs, are developed – and that the respective accountabilities and responsibilities of UNICEF and the other CLAs involved are very clearly defined.

### Cluster functions

The purpose of clusters and AORs is to ensure a well-coordinated, strategic, adequate, coherent and effective response, as outlined in the IASC *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*<sup>13</sup> and in accordance with the Principles of Partnership.<sup>14</sup>

- The UNICEF representative is ultimately accountable to the HC and resident coordinator for the effective functioning of the cluster(s).
- The representative has a responsibility to enable cluster(s) to function effectively by: i) timely appointment of an adequate number of appropriately experienced staff; ii) ensuring availability/accessibility of adequate administrative, logistical and office services to clusters; iii) ensuring funding is available for coordination functions; iv) ensuring effective management of cluster staff; and v) providing representation of and advocacy on behalf of cluster(s) in the HCT and other fora.
- Specific aspects of the UNICEF representative's responsibility under the six core functions of the cluster(s) include:
  - Ensuring establishment and maintenance of effective cluster coordination mechanisms;
  - Ensuring quality and coherence of cluster plans, in line with the strategic direction agreed by the HCT and in line with the strategic response plan (SRP);
  - Ensuring that UNICEF emergency programme plans and targets are aligned with agreed cluster plans, priorities, objectives and indications;
  - Advocacy on behalf of the cluster on various issues (including for funding), with the HCT, donors, government and partners, that they implement programmes in line with the SRP and cluster priorities and that they adopt and adhere to relevant standards and guidelines;
  - Monitoring cluster reports against plans and overseeing corrective strategies and actions to address poor cluster progress against plans;

<sup>13</sup> IASC, *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*, June 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Principles of Partnership: <[www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org](http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org)>.



- Ensuring that corrective actions specifically relevant to UNICEF are implemented as necessary, e.g. UNICEF pipeline supply and partner programme cooperation agreement issues;
- Ensuring, as far as is possible, that UNICEF Humanitarian Action Plans (HAPs) and Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) are aligned to cluster reporting formats; and
- Ensuring quality and coherence of cluster and UNICEF programme plans for preparedness and capacity-building.

Guinea, 2015. As the incidence of new infections of the Ebola virus falls, a worker from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies sprays disinfecting chlorine solution on the gloved hands of a fellow worker.

### **Cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations**

Evidence shows that cross-cutting issues are not adequately reflected in humanitarian plans and operations, and that there remains a lack of consensus on which issues should be considered to be cross cutting.<sup>15</sup> The UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) recommends that UNICEF-led clusters and AORs address five core cross-cutting issues – age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health.

While protection is not considered to be one of the core cross-cutting issues, in 2013 the IASC endorsed a statement affirming the commitment of IASC Principals to ensuring the centrality of protection in humanitarian action.

The statement articulates that responsibility for placing protection at the centre of international humanitarian action lies with HCs, HCTs and all cluster coordinators, while the protection cluster fulfils the following roles: supporting humanitarian actors to develop protection strategies; supporting sectors to mainstream protection; and coordinating of specialist protection services.

<sup>15</sup> The Transformative Agenda identified age, environment, gender and HIV as issues of concern for all sectors. Gradually, however, additional areas such as mental health and psychosocial support, disability, disaster risk reduction, early recovery, protection and human rights became associated with the term 'cross-cutting issues'. A strategic review commissioned by OCHA in 2013 recommends that five core issues around diversity should be considered as being cross-cutting – age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health. To limit the cross-cutting issues to five is not to say the other areas are not important – rather that these other areas already have established platforms for representation and mechanisms for support at point of delivery.

## SUMMARY



Vanuatu, 2015. This baby was born just a week before Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu. Despite the emergency, she was vaccinated against polio.

In addition to co-leadership of the GBV AOR with UNFPA, UNICEF has a responsibility to ensure that all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs appropriately incorporate interventions to prevent and respond to GBV in all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC). GBV prevention and response interventions should *not* be delayed due to a lack of solid information/reporting on incidents of GBV. Evidence continually shows that GBV will be present in humanitarian situations; therefore, the minimum set of GBV prevention and response interventions should be established right at the beginning of an emergency.

In 2011, the IASC Principals endorsed five Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) – leadership/governance; transparency; feedback and complaints; participation; and design, monitoring and evaluation. The Principals agreed to incorporate these commitments into the policies and operational guidelines of their organizations and to promote them with operational partners, HCTs and cluster partners.

Clearly, to incorporate the five core cross-cutting issues (age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health), the centrality of protection (including GBV) and CAAP into the routine work of each cluster and AOR is a complex process. Ideally, each of these issues should be included by *all* clusters and AORs in each phase of the HPC. However, in reality, and depending on the context of the situation, some of these issues will be more important than others.

It is therefore recommended that *all* clusters and AORs should incorporate gender, age and prevention of violence, along with CAAP, as a basic minimum across all phases of the HPC, but that the clusters undertake a process of reflection on the context of the situation, to prioritize which additional issues should be incorporated into the cluster processes and routine work.

## SUMMARY



Cluster coordinators should utilize the available skills and expertise of the relevant focal points (age, disability, gender, GBV, HIV, mental health and protection) to build understanding of these issues within the cluster and to develop and/or adapt tools to incorporate these issues into cluster work. Expert focal point staff should be able to support each cluster through briefings, orientation and training; adaptation of generic tools for use by each specific cluster; and mentoring of clusters.

It is important that cluster coordinators build a shared vision among cluster partners about the importance of developing programmes that ensure the affected population has safe and equal access to quality services, including how to minimize the risk of physical and sexual violence and discrimination, and how to ensure accountability to affected populations.

Philippines, 2014.  
Students at Banuyo  
Elementary School  
talk to a UNICEF  
Philippines emergency  
communications  
specialist about  
why good hygiene  
is important at their  
school.

### The UNICEF representative is responsible for:

- Oversight of work in relation to cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations in all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs; and
- Advocacy, as necessary, within the HCT to ensure that the relevant practical guidance and support is made available for clusters and AORs to appropriately incorporate these issues into the cluster and AOR responses.

## SUMMARY

### Provider of last resort (POLR)

Where a UNICEF-led cluster is activated, UNICEF must be ready to ensure provision of services to fill critical gaps identified by the cluster and reflected in the SRP, when access, security and funds are in place (see IASC *Cluster Coordination Reference Module (CCRM)*) cluster characteristics and accountability matrix (Section 1.1, page 31).

### Inter-cluster coordination

Inter-cluster coordination is the mechanism through which clusters come together at national and sub-national level to coordinate the response through each stage of the HPC. Good inter-cluster coordination is critical to the success of an emergency response. The HC/resident coordinator and HCT, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), determine the shape and function of inter-cluster coordination during a crisis.

#### The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:

- Advocate in the HCT, as necessary, for improved inter-cluster coordination between specific clusters to address key strategic issues through a multi-cluster approach, e.g. in relation to malnutrition or cholera, or across all clusters in relation to inter-cluster support services or activities;
- Advocate, as necessary, for adequate representation of UNICEF-led AORs in inter-cluster mechanisms; and
- Convene effective in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AORs, thus enhancing UNICEF-led cluster coherence of approach and collaboration and reducing duplication of effort on common issues. This will also promote programme integration within UNICEF.

As defined in cluster guidance modules, there is a need to promote good communication and cooperation between the cluster(s) and HCT.

#### The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:

- Advocate in the HCT, as necessary, for improved communication between the HCT and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms; and
- Ensure good in-house two-way flow of information between the country representative and UNICEF-led cluster/AOR coordinators. This includes briefing and debriefing before and after inter-cluster coordination and HCT meetings to endorse key messages and to ensure common understanding and positions on key issues discussed during these meetings.

### Preparedness

Preparedness includes any action or capacity development introduced before an emergency to improve the overall effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of response and recovery. The IASC *Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance* have been

replaced by the emergency response preparedness (ERP) approach, which has been adopted by the IASC.<sup>16 17</sup>

**The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:**

- Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters and AORs, or (where appropriate) sector coordinators, implement the ERP approach;
- Ensure quality and comprehensiveness of cluster and AOR emergency response preparedness plans, with monitoring and support from global cluster coordinators, a dedicated cluster manager (when in post) or other appropriately skilled individuals in-country;
- Ensure that minimum preparedness actions are implemented by UNICEF-led clusters and AOR/sectors, including (but not limited to) arrangements for coordination; and
- Engage with the Global Cluster Coordination Unit and ensure that cluster and sector coordinators engage with the respective global cluster coordinators for support and guidance on implementation of the ERP approach where there is a high risk of emergencies.

**Cluster management arrangements**

Internal cluster management arrangements will vary from country to country, depending on the context.

**The UNICEF representative is responsible for:**

- Oversight of the cluster management arrangement (in conjunction with the cluster co-lead where this exists);
- Ensuring that terms of reference (TORs) for country clusters, strategic advisory groups and technical working groups, indicating membership, leadership and respective responsibilities are developed; and
- Ensuring that relevant government sectors are appropriately engaged with and involved in cluster management.

**Minimum commitments for participation in clusters**

The IASC has outlined 12 minimum commitments for partner participation in clusters. These commitments do not seek to exclude organizations from participating in clusters or to impede participation of national authorities in cluster coordination, where this is appropriate.

16 IASC, *Guidance for Inter-Agency Emergency Response Preparedness*, 2013.

17 The ERP approach encompasses i) risk profiling; ii) early warning monitoring; iii) minimum preparedness action (MPA); iv) contingency response planning (CRP); and v) standard operating procedures for the initial emergency response and should be carried out at inter-agency level and then replicated at sector cluster level.

## SUMMARY

The UNICEF representative is responsible for overseeing that clusters implement the minimum commitments for partners, together with the cluster co-lead, where this exists (see Section 1.10, page 54).

Where an implementing agency's mandate prevents it from formally participating in the cluster as a partner, it should nevertheless be encouraged to participate (with observer status if necessary) and to share information around needs and gaps in emergency response. The cluster coordinator is responsible for facilitation of this participation.

### Sub-national coordination

Sub-national emergency coordination is critical when responses take place in remote areas and/or extend over a large territory. As with national-level clusters, sub-national cluster coordination structures should only be established on the basis of operational need and should be deactivated as soon as those needs are met or when local coordination capacity is adequate.

Ethiopia, 2014. Workers apportion the contents of food sacks for rations in Kule camp, where refugees from South Sudan fled.



**The UNICEF representative is responsible for:**

- Engaging in analysis and decision-making within the HCT on the establishment of sub-national clusters.
- Oversight of the establishment and management of effective sub-national coordination structures for each of the clusters and AORs the HCT leads or co-leads.
- Ensuring appropriate staffing of sub-national level clusters. In some situations, especially large-scale sudden onset emergencies, full-time cluster coordinators and information management specialists are appointed to sub-national level by the CLA. However, in other situations, particularly long-term protracted emergencies, cluster coordination functions could be carried out through double-hatting of a CLA staff member and/or by a partner NGO staff member.
- As with national-level cluster coordination, it is essential that UNICEF and/or the co-lead agency provide the required operational and administrative support to enable the cluster to function effectively (see Section 2.4, page 73).

**Sharing leadership**

Evaluation and experience show that when cluster leadership is shared between United Nations agencies and national authorities, NGOs and other key humanitarian actors, there is stronger engagement and better coordination.

**The UNICEF representative is responsible for directly and proactively supporting co-leadership of clusters. It is recommended that:**

- Selection of the agency to take on shared leadership responsibility should be based on the agency's i) operational and technical relevance in the emergency; ii) capacity to provide appropriately experienced staff; iii) commitment to contribute consistently; and iv) at national level, a co-lead agency should have demonstrated capacity to contribute strategically.
- Where it is not possible for a government to co-lead, selection of cluster co-lead agencies should be done through an open and transparent process meeting predefined criteria, ideally reaching consensus through consultation within the cluster.
- Letters of understanding (LOUs) should be developed to ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- The UNICEF representative should, through the HCT, encourage coherence of terminology and approach across clusters in a situation where co-leadership is being implemented at country level, and should engage with the GCCU and global cluster coordinators for guidance on co-leadership. Currently, multiple terms are used to describe shared leadership, including co-facilitator, co-coordinator, co-steward and co-lead.

Where a co-leadership model is desired and appropriate, it is essential that funding does not become an obstacle for the agencies interested in and committed to taking on a co-lead role. Funds may be mobilized by an approved co-lead agency through pooled funding mechanisms and/or, where appropriate, through bilateral funding (as with funding for UNICEF coordinator costs – see Section 2.2.4, page 69). UNICEF should advocate for donor support as required, both directly to donors and via the HCT.

## SUMMARY

UNICEF may also mobilize funds for cluster co-leadership. There are advantages to this approach, especially in the early stages of an emergency, until co-lead agencies make other arrangements. These advantages are that one request per cluster is made to donors rather than several, that all co-leads can be afforded the same level of support and that immediate funding makes some national NGOs eligible (when they might not otherwise have been so). However, it is recognized that this approach could lead to a false perception of UNICEF's ownership of the cluster, and that it is simply sub-contracting agencies to take on cluster coordination roles. It is important that UNICEF works to negate this perception through ensuring a transparent consultative process for selection of the cluster co-lead agency.

### Monitoring cluster coordination

The CCRM refers to two different cluster monitoring processes: i) cluster coordination performance monitoring (CCPM), which is an exercise where clusters periodically assess their performance against the six core functions of the cluster (Section 1.4, page 35) and CAAP; and ii) cluster coordination architecture review – which is a process that assesses the appropriateness and relevance of cluster coordination structures in light of changes in context and strategic objectives of the SRP, and determines if clusters should continue as they are, be expanded, merge, be streamlined, or transition with benchmarks for deactivation.

#### **The UNICEF representative is responsible for oversight of monitoring of cluster coordination functions in UNICEF-led/co-led clusters. This includes:**

- Where CCPM is being conducted by all clusters, actively participating in the planning of CCPM through the HCT, including agreeing on an appropriate timeframe for the process;
- Supporting cluster coordinators to prepare for and implement the CCPM survey;
- Engaging in a process of discussion with cluster partners on the CCPM analysis and findings of the CCPM survey;
- Supporting relevant corrective actions and, if needed, requesting support from the regional office or global cluster coordinator;
- Ensuring that cluster(s) monitor implementation of the CCPM action plan regularly; and
- Through the HCT, engaging in planning of cluster architecture reviews; oversight of implementation of the review; and discussion on the way forward based on findings of the architecture review.

### Human resource mobilization for UNICEF-led clusters and AORs

As outlined in IASC guidance,<sup>18</sup> UNICEF is responsible for ensuring the timely recruitment of adequate numbers of staff with the appropriate level of seniority, facilitation skills and technical ability to ensure effective cluster coordination, including information management. Decisions as to how much capacity is required will depend on context. In some cases it may be feasible for programme staff to take on cluster/AOR coordinator and information management roles, whereas in other situations dedicated full-time cluster coordination staff (coordinator and information manager) will be necessary.

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<sup>18</sup> IASC, *Operational Guidance on Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster Coordinators at Country Level*, 2010.

**The UNICEF country office has a responsibility to:**

- Secure funding for and recruit cluster/AOR coordinators and information management officers.
- Develop a strategy for staffing for clusters and AORs based on an analysis of coordination capacity and need, and ensure that all cluster and AOR coordination posts are incorporated into the programme budget review and operational staffing matrix and, where appropriate, that fixed-term cluster and AOR coordination posts (cluster coordinator and information manager) are established.
- In addition to recruitment of staff, the country office may fill the cluster coordination positions through secondment of staff from in-country NGOs or through the use of various mechanisms for temporary/surge support.
- While the option for temporary/surge staff provides significant support for country offices, it must be recognized that the overall responsibility for funding and recruitment of staff for clusters and AORs falls on the country office.
- Most of the mechanisms for temporary/surge support are for relatively short periods of time. Therefore, they should be viewed as short-term options to be used on an interim basis while arrangements for longer-term appointments are being processed.
- It is essential that the country office start the process of recruitment for longer-term positions as a priority at the outset of an emergency, recognizing that temporary/surge mechanisms are gap-filling measures to support the country office until it can recruit staff.
- All seconded staff should be fully integrated into the UNICEF country office and treated as equal members the UNICEF team. These members of staff report to UNICEF and should be line-managed by UNICEF.

**Double-hatting**

In some situations (e.g. in smaller-scale or some protracted emergencies), it is appropriate for a UNICEF programme staff member to function as cluster coordinator in addition to his/her UNICEF programme responsibilities. This is termed 'double-hatting'.

**In a situation where double-hatting is in place it is recommended that:**

- Cluster coordination responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions should be clearly articulated in the job description and in the performance appraisal of the post holder, and monitored through regular meetings with the supervisor(s) to ensure that the dual role is sustained.
- A double-hatting cluster coordinator must always make it clear when speaking on behalf of and representing the cluster and when speaking on behalf of and representing UNICEF.
- Where possible, another person should represent UNICEF at meetings, especially in a situation where UNICEF is likely to take a different position from other cluster partners, and it is absolutely essential that another person represent UNICEF when funding allocations are being made.

## SUMMARY

### **Neutrality of the cluster coordinators**

Cluster coordinators are employed by or seconded to UNICEF and report to the country representative or his/her designate. Nevertheless, the cluster and AOR coordinators have an overriding duty to the partners and should act as neutral representatives of the cluster as a whole rather than as representatives of UNICEF.<sup>19</sup>

The neutrality of the coordinator position may be promoted through:

- Appointment of a dedicated coordinator rather than a double-hatting coordinator;
- The cluster coordinator reporting to someone other than the chief of section;
- Regular clarification of a position of neutrality with partners, backed up by practice, i.e. cluster coordinators should not be expected to represent UNICEF or take on any UNICEF programme work;
- The UNICEF chief of section and senior staff participating actively in cluster meetings, representing UNICEF as a cluster partner (so the cluster coordinator doesn't have to represent UNICEF);
- In contexts where it is appropriate, location of cluster offices outside UNICEF premises (however, it is recognized that this is not always viable due to security and office/operational support requirements); and
- Clear differentiation by the double-hatting coordinator when speaking on behalf of UNICEF as opposed to when speaking on behalf of the cluster.

### **UNICEF line management of cluster and AOR coordinators**

The decision on the best option for direct line management of UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators will be taken at country level, based on an analysis of the context and capacities, and on the following general recommendations and principles.

In L3 emergencies it is recommended that the UNICEF country office identify a person of an appropriate level of seniority to manage the clusters (e.g. the chief of field operations) or, if the scale of response requires it, recruit a dedicated cluster manager. The manager of the clusters should work under the direct supervision of the country representative, providing strategic direction and management and ensuring streamlined and effective coordination of the UNICEF co-led clusters and AORs. S/he would also be responsible for direct line management of the cluster and AOR coordinators.

Information management officers are normally managed by coordinators.

In L2/1 emergencies there are two options:

1. The cluster and AOR coordinators will be directly managed by the UNICEF representative.
2. If this is not feasible, the representative should bear the following in mind when deciding how to manage the coordinators:
  - All UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators should be managed by one person to ensure coherence of approach within UNICEF-led clusters and to ensure that issues common to all clusters are identified and addressed coherently.
  - The manager should be of an appropriate level of seniority and have the required capacity to manage the cluster and AOR coordinators.
  - It is essential that the manager regularly brief the representative, and attend HCT meetings alongside him/her.
  - There should be regular UNICEF cluster meetings with the representative and manager to give the cluster coordinators the opportunity to engage with the representative, and to allow him/her to gain a deeper understanding of cluster-related issues.

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<sup>19</sup> IASC, 'Joint Letter from Cluster Lead Agencies to their Directors/Representatives at Country Level', October 2009.

## SUMMARY

Where a cluster coordinator is double-hatting, it is recommended that the coordinator regularly meet with and report to the UNICEF representative on cluster-related issues (in addition to meetings with the chief of section who could be the line manager for programme-related work). Cluster coordination responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions should be clearly articulated in the job description and performance appraisal of the post holder, and monitored through regular meetings with both supervisors to ensure that the dual role remains viable.

**UNICEF-led cluster-manager management meetings**

It is recommended that the manager (of the cluster coordinators) holds a regular meeting, with all of the cluster coordinators together, to review cluster and AOR progress, plans and problems, and for the manager to provide strategic guidance and direction for cluster and AOR coordinators.

This meeting will give the manager and cluster coordinators the opportunity to brief and debrief on inter-cluster coordination and HCT discussions and to ensure common understanding on position on key issues that have been discussed during these meetings. Such a meeting will also facilitate cross-cluster and AOR communication and sharing of experience, and will enhance coherence of approach and collaboration between UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

- It is recommended that the cluster coordinators meet with the manager more frequently at the outset of an emergency.
- It may be appropriate for the chiefs of section(s) to attend these meetings. This would foster connectedness between clusters and programmes. It would also enhance chiefs of section(s) understanding on cluster priorities, and increase their capacity to act as cluster officers-in-charge when required.
- It is also recommended that the country representatives (or equivalent) of cluster and AOR co-lead agencies attend these meetings and actively engage in the overall management and strategic direction of the cluster(s). This will enhance a common understanding of cluster priorities.

Palestine, 2014. A flower grows amid the rubble remnants of buildings in the town of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.



## SUMMARY



Sierra Leone, 2014. These children had to stay out of school during the Ebola crisis, when almost half of Sierra Leone's population was quarantined.

Where the cluster coordinators are managed by someone other than the UNICEF representative (i.e. a cluster manager, the deputy representative or the emergency/field coordinator), it is recommended that the country representative periodically attends these meetings to give the cluster coordinators the opportunity to engage with the representative, and through this dialogue allow him/her to gain a greater depth of understanding of cluster-related issues.

### **Monitoring of cluster performance and cluster functioning**

The manager is responsible for reviewing the cluster monitoring reports (both updates on progress of cluster partners against targets set out in the SRP and periodic coordination function monitoring) and taking corrective measures as required. UNICEF's regular programmatic monitoring systems should feed into and align, as far as is possible, with the SRP monitoring framework.

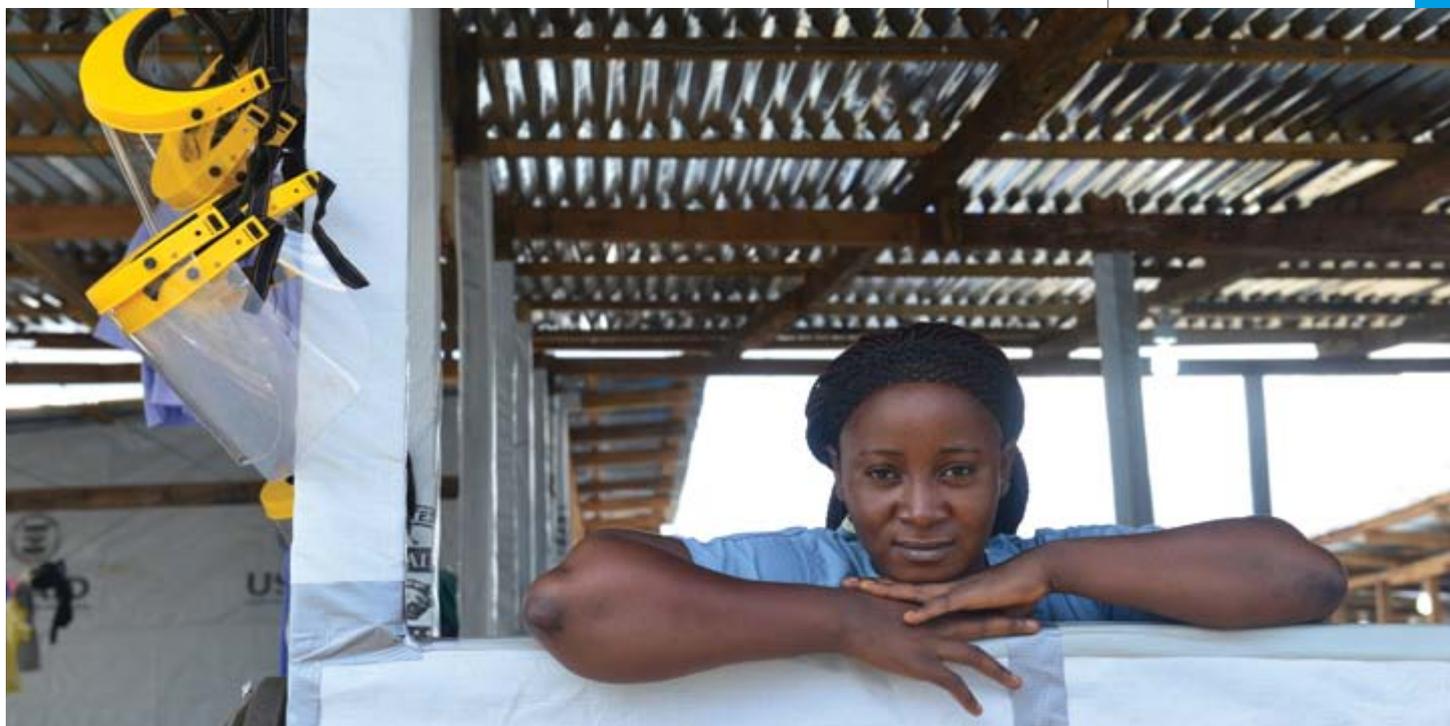
### **The UNICEF representative's attendance at cluster and AOR coordination meetings**

It is strongly recommended that the UNICEF representative periodically attend cluster and AOR meetings: i) to support the cluster and AOR coordinator(s); ii) to illustrate to cluster partners UNICEF's commitment to the cluster(s) and AOR as a CLA; iii) to engage in key strategic discussions with cluster and AOR partners; and iv) to remain in touch with the dynamics of each of the UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

It is also recommended that the UNICEF representative encourage the heads of cluster(s) and AOR co-lead agencies to participate in the respective cluster and AOR meetings.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Heads of cluster co-lead agency attendance at cluster meetings is recommended using the same rationale as UNICEF representative's attendance: to show support for the coordinator(s) and commitment to the partners, to engage in strategic discussion and to be in touch with the dynamics of the cluster(s).



### Representation of the clusters and AORs in the HCT by the UNICEF representative

Through all phases of the response, the UNICEF representative has a dual responsibility in the HCT to represent the interests of UNICEF as an organization, and to represent the interests of the UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

The UNICEF representative needs to clearly differentiate whether s/he is speaking on behalf of UNICEF or on behalf of the various clusters. The representative is also expected to speak knowledgeably about cluster issues. It is therefore essential that the representative is well briefed and updated on the activities, progress, plans and issues for each of the clusters and AORs that UNICEF leads.<sup>21</sup>

- It is recommended that: i) where in post, the dedicated cluster manager attend the HCT meetings together with but not in place of the UNICEF representative; ii) where the deputy representative or the emergency/field coordinator is responsible for management of the clusters s/he attend the HCT meetings, together with but again not in place of the representative; iii) the attendance of UNICEF cluster coordinators in the HCT should be on a rotation basis, with the attendee ensuring information is fed back to the other UNICEF clusters/AORs; and iv) specific cluster coordinators should (on request) attend HCT meetings to provide technical and operational expertise on specific thematic/technical issues.
- It is also suggested that UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators regularly have the opportunity to attend the HCT meetings as observers, to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the HCT. UNICEF cluster coordinator attendance in the HCT meetings could be rotated, with the coordinator who attends them taking some responsibility for reporting back on the meeting to the other UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators.

Liberia, 2014. An Ebola survivor at a newly built Ebola treatment unit in Monrovia.

<sup>21</sup> Heads of cluster co-lead agencies are also expected to speak knowledgeably about cluster issues, so it is essential that they be well briefed and updated on the activities, progress, plans and issues for the clusters that they represent.

## SUMMARY



Niger, 2014. This girl's family was displaced during floods. Fortunately, her schooling continues.

### **Representation of clusters and AORs at UNICEF emergency management team conference calls by the UNICEF representative**

The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to ensure that cluster- and AOR-related issues are included in the agenda of emergency management team calls chaired by the UNICEF global emergency coordinator for the specific emergency. As with HCT representation, it is essential that the representative is up to date and well informed on activities, progress, plans and issues for each of the clusters and AORs.

Country cluster coordinators should also attend these meetings. Alternatively, they may be represented by the dedicated cluster manager (where in post) or the manager of the cluster coordinators (when this is someone other than the country representative).

### **UNICEF programmes working with clusters**

In addition to meeting its obligation as CLA, it is to UNICEF's advantage to ensure well-functioning clusters. Strong, functional clusters will ultimately strengthen UNICEF emergency

programme responses, better enabling UNICEF programmes to reach their objectives and targets. Programme sections should work with, support and strengthen their respective clusters.

UNICEF programme sections should participate actively in the cluster.

The chief of section(s) represents UNICEF in the cluster(s) through:

- Active participation in all aspects of cluster processes and mechanisms, as an implementing partner of the cluster;
- Membership of the strategic advisory group, where one is formed; and
- Double-hatting where necessary and relevant.

Technical staff members from section(s) should also actively participate in cluster(s).

- Relevant technical staff members from UNICEF sections should attend cluster meetings and participate in relevant processes.
- Where technical working groups are formed, appropriately experienced and skilled UNICEF technical staff should proactively participate in these groups, and where the appropriate level of technical capacity exists, UNICEF should play a key role in leadership within these groups.

Cluster and AOR coordinators should participate in respective section meetings. This will clearly facilitate cluster/section collaboration and coordination.

### **Planning and budgeting for cluster activities**

Good collaboration between the cluster/AOR coordinator and chief of section and other relevant programme staff members is essential for a well-functioning cluster/AOR.

Cluster coordinators and programme staff should work together to ensure that cluster and AOR coordination activities are included in the annual work plans of each of the programme sections under the CCCs.

Funding for cluster and AOR coordination functions (salaries and core activities such as needs assessments) should be included in UNICEF project submissions to the SRP, in the relevant project proposals submitted through the various pooled funding mechanisms and, when appropriate,<sup>22</sup> in UNICEF programme proposals submitted to donors.

Regardless of whether coordination staff members are full-time cluster staff or are double-hatting, cluster coordination costs must be clearly calculated and transparently outlined in the various budgets.

Release of cluster funding requires collaboration and coordination between the cluster coordinator and budget holder. It is also important that the mechanisms for the release of funding are straightforward and streamlined, that the processes are made clear to the cluster coordinators (some of whom may not have experience of UNICEF processes), and that the various sections facilitate timely disbursement of cluster funding.

Programme and cluster staff should work together to avoid duplication and foster streamlining of information management and other reporting formats and administrative processes that cluster and UNICEF partners may participate in.

Programme and cluster staff should coordinate administrative support functions, to ensure shared resources are effectively used and that there is mutual understanding and agreement on work priorities of shared staff.

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<sup>22</sup> Where a large percentage of UNICEF programme has an emergency focus.

## SUMMARY

### **UNICEF operational and administrative support for clusters**

As UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are established in-country, clearly there is a need for UNICEF to scale up administrative and logistical functions to ensure the office has the capacity to provide the required level of support for effective cluster coordination.

While it is appreciated that in the early stages of an acute onset emergency the operational and administrative support services for the cluster(s) may be less than optimal, it is the responsibility of the UNICEF representative to ensure that the various sections of the organization prioritize provision of operational and administrative support services for effective coordination as soon as possible.

#### **Operational and administrative support for clusters includes the provision of:**

- Suitable office space and furnishing for cluster coordination teams to work effectively and to meet with partners.
- Adequate communication and information technology equipment and technical support.
- Technical support to establish and maintain a cluster/AOR website or web page where an information manager may not be in post or does not have the required technical assistance.
- Adequate logistics support, including transport, with an appreciation that cluster staff are often expected to work after normal office working hours and will require transport.
- Access to translation services.
- An adequate level of administrative support. Options include: i) the appointment of an administrative officer to provide administrative support to all clusters (this model has been successful in some country offices); and ii) an administrative officer from the programme section to perform a dual function – providing administrative support for both programme and cluster. In such a case, it will be important to ensure that cluster-related responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions be clearly articulated in the job description and performance appraisal of the post holder, and good collaborative working relationships be established between the cluster coordinator and the chief of section and senior technical staff.

### **UNICEF cluster meetings**

It is essential that space be created to allow cluster-related issues to be adequately discussed and addressed within UNICEF, to ultimately enhance UNICEF support of cluster coordination.<sup>23</sup> The specific purpose of internal UNICEF discussion on clusters is to:

- Keep UNICEF staff informed and updated on cluster progress against key milestones, cluster plans, problems and issues; and
- Cohesively address cluster support issues related to human resources, supplies, logistics, finance, etc.

Three options to create the space are suggested:

1. Cluster issues could be included as a regular item on the agenda of UNICEF country office weekly meetings or, where it exists, on the agenda of the UNICEF country office emergency

## SUMMARY

task force/emergency management team meeting (usually a weekly meeting), with cluster coordinators and information managers attending.

2. UNICEF cluster meetings could be held regularly (it is recommended that they be held twice a month in the early stages of emergency, changing to monthly as the situation stabilizes). The meetings could be chaired by the country representative and attended by the dedicated cluster manager (where in post), cluster coordinators and information managers, the emergency/field coordinator and other key emergency staff, the deputy representative and chiefs of sections of programmes and operations.
3. Emergency task force/emergency management team meetings could be alternated with UNICEF cluster meetings.

**Bangladesh, 2014.**  
Students peep out of a window of a temporary school, which stands in place of Paschim Sharikkhali Government Primary School after it was devastated by Cyclone Mahasen.





# PART ONE



# Part One: The cluster approach – how it works and UNICEF country representative responsibilities

This part of the document has been developed to align with the IASC CCRM<sup>24</sup> to facilitate ease of cross-referencing.

## 1.1 Cluster and sector coordination (CCRM Section 1)

**UNICEF commitment to coordination in humanitarian action is articulated under the CCCs.**

The cluster approach is not the only humanitarian coordination solution in emergencies. Ideally, and in many contexts, humanitarian coordination may be led by respective government sectors, reporting to a designated government body. In such situations, international humanitarian support, underpinned by the principles of the cluster approach, can augment national coordination capacity. UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate international responses for refugees (within and outside camps) and clusters are not established in such a context.

Clusters and AORs are formally activated when existing coordination mechanisms are overwhelmed or constrained in their ability to respond to identified needs in line with humanitarian principles.<sup>25</sup> When clusters and AORs are activated, the CLA has a responsibility for leadership of the clusters and AORs and is accountable for effective functioning and performance of clusters and AORs to affected populations, the HC and emergency relief coordinator, and to national authorities.

Opposite: Central African Republic, 2014. A girl cuddles her toy unicorn at the Saint Sauveur displacement site in Bangui.

<sup>24</sup> IASC, *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*, final draft, June 2014

<sup>25</sup> Mechanisms are 'overwhelmed' when current structures can no longer manage due to the scale of need and number of actors involved, and the adoption of a more complex multi-sectoral approach is necessary. A government is 'constrained' when it is unable or unwilling to act (e.g. because it is itself party to a conflict).

## PART ONE

**Table 1: Comparison of characteristics and accountabilities of clusters and sectors are outlined in the *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*<sup>26</sup>**

	ACTIVATED CLUSTER	SECTORAL EMERGENCY COORDINATION
<b>Leadership</b>	The designated CLA (or agencies) leads and manages the cluster. Where possible, it does so in co-leadership with government bodies and NGOs. Strong links should be made with development coordination bodies to ensure that early recovery approaches are aligned with national development objectives and that steps are taken to strengthen national preparedness and response capacity.	The national government or a designated national agency leads the sector.  International humanitarian support, underpinned by the principles of the cluster approach, can augment national capacity.
<b>Accountability</b>	A CLA is accountable for its cluster performance to the HC and emergency relief coordinator, as well as to national authorities and affected people. Performance is measured in terms of needs met as outlined in the SRP objectives, and respect for national and humanitarian law and principles.	The government is accountable for the quality of the response, and for acting in accordance with national and humanitarian law and principles.
<b>Provider of last resort</b>	Where necessary, and depending on access, security and availability of funding, the cluster lead, as POLR, must be ready to ensure the provision of services to fill critical gaps identified by the cluster and reflected in the HC-led HCT SRP.	As stated in General Assembly Resolution 46/182, national authorities have the primary responsibility for taking care of victims of natural disasters and other emergencies that occur in their territories.
<b>Lifespan</b>	Activated clusters are temporary and subject to regular review (see Sections 1.3 and 1.11).	Long-term structures are defined by the government.
<b>Mainstreaming of protection, early recovery strategies and cross-cutting issues</b>	The CLA is responsible for ensuring that protection, early recovery strategies and cross-cutting issues <sup>27</sup> are mainstreamed into programming.	International partners can advise the government on mainstreaming. International partners have a duty to respect internationally agreed principles and align their programming to national policies, guidance and standards.
<b>Human resources for coordination</b>	The CLA will provide cluster staff to meet needs, including the need for coordination and information management.	Government bodies are responsible for ensuring that sufficient coordination capacity is available.
<b>Technical support</b>	Relevant cluster members, the CLA in-country, the regional office or the global cluster may provide technical support and guidance.	In-country agencies or the relevant global cluster may provide technical support and guidance as needed, when capacity and resources allow.
<b>Role of global clusters in preparedness</b>	Global clusters do not restrict their support to formally activated clusters. If there is a high level of risk or imminent threat of an emergency, they may support other humanitarian coordination and response structures to prepare.	

<sup>26</sup> IASC, *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*, final draft, June 2014 (page 5).

<sup>27</sup> Age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health: see Section 1.4.1, page 39 on cross-cutting issues.

## 1.2 Cluster activation (CCRM Section 2)

The decision to activate clusters and AORs is made by the HCT,<sup>28</sup> in consultation with national partners, and is based on an analysis of context, including the scale of the humanitarian need and the capacity of existing coordination structures on the ground. When a cluster or AOR is not activated, it does not mean that the sector concerned is not a priority. Rather, it implies that the government is leading the coordination in that sector. The government's role may be augmented by CLAs, and underpinned by Principles of Partnership (see Section 1.1, page 31).

### The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:

- Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on activation of clusters and AORs in-country; and
- Alert the GCCU if guidance or support is required.

### 1.2.1 Selection of CLAs

In consultation with the HCT, the HC<sup>29</sup> proposes the CLA based on the agency's coordination and response capacity, operational presence and ability to scale up; this recommendation is submitted to the emergency relief coordinator for final approval. The selection of CLAs ideally mirrors global arrangements, but this is not always possible and sometimes other organizations are in a better position to lead clusters and AORs. Shared leadership should also be considered (see Section 1.10, page 54).

Where UNICEF does not have operational programmes in a particular sector where clusters or AORs will be established, the UNICEF country office needs seriously to consider its position and realistic ability to adequately fulfil the coordination function for the relevant cluster/AOR, in both the short and the longer term. Depending on the context, the UNICEF representative and the HCT may decide that:

- Another organization is better placed to take full CLA responsibility for the cluster/AOR, in which case the UNICEF representative will facilitate linkages with the relevant global cluster coordinators;
- UNICEF should share CLA responsibility with another organization; or
- Another organization should take on CLA responsibility in the short term, with UNICEF agreeing to scale up and take CLA responsibility in the longer term.

## 1.3 Cluster transition and deactivation (CCRM Section 3)

Cluster transition refers to the process through which the transfer of leadership and accountabilities is planned and implemented, leading to deactivation.

Cluster deactivation is the closure of a formally activated cluster, with the transfer of cluster core functions (see Section 1.4, page 35) to government sectors or other crisis-coordination mechanisms.

Transition and deactivation may be considered when one of the two criteria for activation no longer exists: i) the humanitarian situation improves, significantly reducing humanitarian need

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<sup>28</sup> Depending on the context, this decision may be made by the United Nations country team or an expanded United Nations country team.

<sup>29</sup> Where an HC is not in post, the resident coordinator will lead the HCT.

## PART ONE

and therefore associated response and coordination gaps; or ii) national structures acquire sufficient capacity to coordinate and meet residual humanitarian needs in line with humanitarian principles.

As with activation, proposals about deactivation of clusters, subject to approval by the emergency relief coordinator, are made by the HCT following (as far as is feasible), consultation with government counterparts. Deactivation of a cluster does *not* mean that humanitarian financing is no longer required – transitional activities, including capacity-building, can be included in budgets to meet core cluster needs, and financing may be allocated to enable national and other authorities to coordinate action to meet residual humanitarian need or strengthen preparedness.

Before transition/deactivation of clusters, a review of the cluster architecture will be conducted – involving national counterparts and development partners – to ensure that recovery approaches are aligned with national development objectives and to strengthen national preparedness and response capacity.

Lebanon, 2013. Boys play near makeshift shelters in the Tal Al Abiad informal settlement for Syrian refugees.



After the review, the HCT, in collaboration with national authorities, will decide if clusters and AORs stay i) as they are; ii) expand; iii) merge; vi) get streamlined; or v) transition with a plan and benchmarks for deactivation.

While merging of clusters has not yet been discussed at a global policy level, there have been several examples of clusters being merged at country level, both at national and sub-national levels, where, during the activation process, it seemed effective to group related clusters in the specific country context or, after a cluster review, as a way of streamlining the cluster system. When clusters and AORs are being merged, it is essential that respective accountabilities and roles of CLAs be defined and that there be clarity on how support will be provided by global clusters.

**The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:**

- Proactively engage in HCT discussion on transition/deactivation of clusters and AORs and also in the planning and oversight of review of the existing co-ordination architecture;
- Proactively consult with the UNICEF-led and co-led cluster and AOR coordinators and cluster partners on transition/deactivation of UNICEF-led clusters and AORs;
- Ensure the GCCU is informed about planned reviews and possible re-structuring of the coordination mechanisms and that relevant global cluster coordinators are actively engaged in the discussion on review of cluster architecture and proposed way forward;
- Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters and AORs develop realistic and viable plans, with benchmarks for transition/deactivation of clusters and AORs;
- Advocate with relevant government sectors on ensuring continued optimal coordination through sector working groups; and
- When merging of UNICEF-led clusters or AORs is proposed following a coordination architecture review, ensure that realistic and viable plans, with benchmarks for merging of clusters and AORs, are developed – and that the respective accountabilities and responsibilities of UNICEF and the other CLAs involved are very clearly defined.

## 1.4 Cluster functions (CCRM Section 4)

The six core functions of the cluster and activities under each of the functions are outlined in Section 4 of the *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*.<sup>30</sup> Table 2 illustrates the role of cluster coordination staff, cluster partners, UNICEF programme staff and the UNICEF representative in relation to the overall cluster purpose and fulfilling of the six core functions of the cluster.

While the respective roles and responsibilities of various cluster partner stakeholders have been articulated, the whole approach of the cluster is to operate with respect to and in line with the Principles of Partnership (equality, transparency, result-orientated approach, responsibility and complementarity).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> IASC, *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*, final draft, June 2014 (page 14).

<sup>31</sup> Principles of Partnership: <[www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org](http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org)>.

**Table 2: Cluster and AOR functions – respective responsibilities matrix**

Cluster and AOR purpose and functions and respective roles and responsibilities of cluster and AOR coordination staff, cluster and AOR partners, UNICEF chiefs of sections and UNICEF representatives:

CLUSTER AND AOR PURPOSE AT COUNTRY LEVEL	ROLE OF COORDINATION STAFF	ROLE OF CLUSTER AND AOR PARTNERS	ROLE OF UNICEF COUNTRY PROGRAMME CHIEFS OF SECTIONS	ROLE OF THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE
<p>To ensure a well-coordinated, strategic, adequate, coherent and effective response in accordance with the Principles of Partnership.</p>	<p>Responsible for day-to-day running of the clusters at country level. To lead the cluster and facilitate a process that ensures the activities under each of the core functions are effectively carried out and monitored in a coordinated manner and that the process promotes inter-agency partnership.</p>	<p>Active participation in cluster mechanisms/processes, including, where appropriate, involvement in strategic issues (strategic advisory group, technical working groups, peer reviews), co-leading clusters (see CCRM Sections 1.7, 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10) and reporting.</p>	<p>Active participation in cluster mechanisms/processes representing UNICEF as a cluster partner. Member of a strategic advisory group where such a body exists. Officer-in-charge for cluster coordinator when the coordinator is not in duty station. Chief of section should demonstrate an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of clusters as defined by IASC guidance notes and should respect the cluster coordinator position of neutrality and responsibility to represent the partners within the cluster.</p>	<p>Ultimately accountable to the HC/resident coordinator for the effective functioning of the cluster(s). The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to enable cluster(s) to function effectively through: i) timely appointment of adequate number of appropriately experienced staff; ii) availability/accessibility of adequate administrative, logistical and office services to clusters; iii) ensuring funding is available for coordination functions; iv) ensuring effective management of cluster staff; and v) representation of and advocacy on behalf of cluster(s) at HCT and in other fora.</p>
<p>To support service delivery by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a platform that ensures service delivery is driven by the SRP and strategic priorities.</li> <li>• Developing mechanisms to eliminate duplication of service delivery.</li> </ul>	<p>Establish and maintain appropriate humanitarian coordination mechanism for coordination and inter-agency planning to ensure consistency and coherence of approach, and that interventions are in line with the SRP and strategic priorities (includes holding regular cluster meetings, circulation of information through partner email lists and/or posting information on website). Ensure effective communication, coordination and reporting between national and sub-national clusters. Establish and maintain 4/5Ws and conduct regular analysis to identify gaps and avoid duplications.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster coordination mechanisms and planning processes. Design and implement programmes that deliver services that support the agreed SRP and cluster strategic priorities. Where appropriate, support staff member to fulfil co-coordinator position at sub-national and/or at national levels (see Section 1.9, page 53 and Section 1.10, page 54). Highlight gaps and duplications where they appear. Provide required information to analyse response.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster coordination mechanisms and planning processes. Design, resource and implement programmes that deliver services that support the agreed SRP and cluster strategic priorities. Support section staff at sub-national level to fulfil sub-national coordinator role as required (see Section 1.9, page 53). Highlight gaps and duplications where they appear. Provide required information to analyse response.</p>	<p>Oversight. Advocacy as/where required to support fulfilment of function (with clusters, within HCT, with donors and with government).</p>

CLUSTER AND AOR PURPOSE AT COUNTRY LEVEL	ROLE OF COORDINATION STAFF	ROLE OF CLUSTER AND AOR PARTNERS	ROLE OF UNICEF COUNTRY PROGRAMME CHIEFS OF SECTIONS	ROLE OF THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE
<p>To inform the HC/HCT's strategic decision-making by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing needs assessment and analysis of gaps (across and within sectors), using information management tools as needed.</li> <li>Identifying and finding solutions for emerging gaps, obstacles, duplications and cross-cutting issues. (See Section 1.4.2 below for more details on cross-cutting issues and centrality of protection, and Sections 1.4.2 and 1.4.1 for more details on CAAP and POLR.)</li> <li>Formulating priorities on the basis of analysis.</li> </ul>	<p>Facilitate cluster in coordination of needs assessment and analysis across and within sectors, including identifying and finding solutions for emerging gaps, obstacles, duplications and cross-cutting issues, and formulating priorities on the basis of analysis.</p> <p>Establish and maintain information databases that consolidate, analyse and report on/disseminate information critical to decision-making.</p> <p>Represent the interests of the cluster in inter-cluster meetings and potentially also at HCT meetings (on request of the UNICEF representative).</p> <p>Ensure that the UNICEF representative is kept informed on process and findings.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster assessment, analysis and processes.</p> <p>Facilitate the cluster to access relevant information from all sources (UNICEF, government, other specialist institutions).</p> <p>Support cluster to undertake quality assessment and analysis (staff, facilities, etc.).</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster assessment, analysis and processes.</p> <p>Facilitate the cluster to access relevant information from all sources (UNICEF, government, other specialist institutions).</p> <p>Support cluster to undertake quality assessment and analysis (staff, facilities, etc.).</p> <p>POLR where no other agency able to provide required services and where access, security and funding available (see Section 1.4.2 below).</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Advocacy as/where required to support fulfilment of function, including funding for assessment (with clusters, within HCT, with donors and with government).</p> <p>Represent cluster(s) at HCT.</p>
<p>To plan and develop strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing sectoral plans, objectives and indicators that directly support realization of the response's strategic priorities.</li> <li>Applying and adhering to standards and guidelines.</li> <li>Clarifying funding requirements, helping to set priorities, and agreeing on cluster contribution to the HC's overall humanitarian funding proposals (flash appeals, Consolidated Appeals Process, Central Emergency Response Fund, Common Humanitarian Fund, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>Facilitate the cluster in the development of plans, objectives and indicators to support realization of the response's strategic priorities through consultative process (establishment of a technical working group may be useful to support this process).</p> <p>Ensure the final work plan is widely disseminated/available (circulate to partners and post on website).</p> <p>Facilitate adoption of international standards and guidelines, which may need to be adapted to national context – ensure these standards are widely disseminated and promote adherence to standards by all cluster partners (circulate to partners and post on website).</p> <p>Clarify funding requirements and priorities through consultative process with cluster partners and present the funding request to the HCT, with solid information/analysis supporting the request.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster processes for work planning (including membership of technical working groups), adoption of standards and clarifying funding requirements.</p> <p>Align agency plans with agreed cluster plan, priorities, objectives and indicators.</p> <p>Promote adherence to standards and guidelines through agency programmes.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster processes for work planning (including membership of technical working groups), adoption of standards and clarifying funding requirements.</p> <p>Through engagement of existing monitoring and evaluation staff, align agency strategic plans with agreed cluster plan, priorities, objectives and indicators.</p> <p>Promote adherence to standards and guidelines through UNICEF programmes and partners.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Ensure quality and coherence of cluster plans in line with SRP.</p> <p>Advocacy with partners for adoption of and adherence to standards and guidelines.</p> <p>Ensure funding requests are adequate/appropriate.</p> <p>Represent cluster(s) at HCT.</p>

CLUSTER AND AOR PURPOSE AT COUNTRY LEVEL	ROLE OF COORDINATION STAFF	ROLE OF CLUSTER AND AOR PARTNERS	ROLE OF UNICEF COUNTRY PROGRAMME CHIEFS OF SECTIONS	ROLE OF THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE
<p>To monitor and evaluate cluster performance:<sup>†</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and reporting on activities and needs.</li> <li>Measuring performance against the cluster strategy and agreed results.</li> <li>Recommending corrective action where necessary.</li> </ul> <p>(See below for more details on cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and CAAP.)</p>	<p>Adapt existing in-country information management approaches for collecting, analysing and reporting on cluster activities and resources.</p> <p>Collect, compile, monitor and report on progress of cluster response and analysis of 4/5Ws against agreed cluster plan, in line with agreed reporting schedule of OCHA and UNICEF.</p> <p>Put forward recommendations and implement actions/strategies for corrective action, as required, for cluster responses.</p> <p>Disseminate reports (circulate to partners and upload to website).</p> <p>Share information on coverage, gaps, output and outcome indicators and other key issues, as required and as agreed, for differing audience(s) – OCHA, government, donors etc.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Monitor programme progress and submit reports to cluster using agreed format/indicators.</p> <p>Implement corrective actions/strategies, as required, in line with cluster recommendations.</p>	<p>Through engagement of existing monitoring and evaluation staff, actively participate in cluster monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>The IASC CCPM can be equated with Pillar 3 of MoREs in humanitarian action, as both focus on performance monitoring.</p> <p>Align agency reporting formats and indicators with cluster and promote use of cluster reporting format/indicators by programme partners.</p> <p>Monitor UNICEF programme progress and submit reports to cluster using agreed format/indicators.</p> <p>Implement corrective actions/strategies, as required, in line with cluster recommendations.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Monitor regular reports from clusters against cluster plans, and feed these into UNICEF reporting on HAPs and MoRES.</p> <p>Monitor implementation of corrective strategies and activities to address poor cluster performance against plans, objectives and targets within the cluster generally.</p> <p>Ensure corrective actions specifically relevant to UNICEF are implemented, e.g. UNICEF pipeline supply and partner programme cooperation agreement issues.</p> <p>Convene regular cluster coordinator/country representative meetings to review cluster progress and plans, and address problems and issues.</p>
<p>To build capacity in preparedness and contingency planning (see Section 1.6 on preparedness).</p>	<p>Identify preparedness training, needs of cluster partners and appropriate opportunities for training to be conducted – within and outside the country – by cluster, UNICEF, OCHA or other appropriate training institutions.</p> <p>Advocate for funding for support of capacity-building activity and facilitate appropriate training to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Actively participate in preparedness planning and development of capacity-building plans.</p> <p>Align agency preparedness and capacity-building plans with cluster(s).</p> <p>If feasible, given organizational capacity, contribute to implementation of agreed cluster plan for preparedness and capacity-building plans (pre-positioning of supplies and training of own and partner staff in-country and beyond).</p>	<p>Actively participate in preparedness planning and development of capacity-building plans.</p> <p>Align UNICEF preparedness and capacity-building plans with cluster(s).</p> <p>Substantial contribution to implementation of agreed cluster plan for preparedness and capacity-building plans (pre-positioning of supplies and training of own and partner staff in-country and beyond).</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Ensure quality and coherence of cluster and UNICEF programme plans for preparedness and capacity-building.</p> <p>Support implementation of cluster and UNICEF programme plans for preparedness and capacity-building.</p> <p>Ensure that adequate funding is available for building capacity in preparedness and contingency planning.</p> <p>Advocate for funding, as required.</p>
<p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying concerns that contribute to HC and HCT messaging and action.</li> <li>Undertaking advocacy on behalf of the cluster, cluster members and affected people.</li> </ul>	<p>Through consultative process with partners, agree on evidence-based, coherent advocacy positions on various key issues.</p> <p>Develop any necessary communication papers on advocacy issues for use by partners.</p> <p>Communicate agreed positions of the cluster externally.</p>	<p>Actively participate in process of identification of advocacy positions on various issues.</p> <p>Align agency advocacy messages with cluster(s) messages as/where relevant.</p>	<p>Actively participate in process of identification of advocacy positions on various issues.</p> <p>Align UNICEF advocacy messages with cluster(s) messages as/where relevant.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Advocate on behalf of the cluster on various issues and in various fora, including with HCT, government and donors. Be sure to make it clear whether advocating on behalf of cluster or specifically for UNICEF.</p>

† Monitoring cluster coordination functions is covered in Part One, Section 1.11.

### 1.4.1 Cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations

This section was developed based on existing policies and guidance. A number of initiatives are currently under way in terms of development of tools, models and frameworks to facilitate incorporation of cross-cutting issues and ensure centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations. Further guidance will be shared when it is available.

#### a) Cross-cutting issues

- Five core cross-cutting issues**
1. Age
  2. Disability
  3. Gender
  4. HIV
  5. Mental health

There is evidence that the subjects generally considered to be cross-cutting issues are not adequately reflected in humanitarian plans and operations and that there remains considerable confusion and lack of consensus within the humanitarian community on which issues should be considered to be cross-cutting.<sup>32</sup>

A strategic review commissioned by OCHA in 2013 recommends that five core issues around diversity should be considered as cross-cutting – age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health.<sup>33</sup> These issues are about people, and specifically the needs of people, in emergency situations. Essentially, different groups of the population are affected differently by a crisis. These five core cross-cutting issues are all elements of diversity.

- UNICEF EMOPS recommends that UNICEF-led clusters and AORs use the ‘five core issues’ definition of cross-cutting issues, these being age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health.
- It is the cluster and AOR coordinator’s responsibility to ensure that these issues are addressed and appropriately incorporated into all phases of the HPC – needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, response implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- The UNICEF representative is ultimately responsible for ensuring that these cross-cutting issues are appropriately addressed by all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

<sup>32</sup> The Transformative Agenda identified age, environment, gender and HIV as issues of concern for all sectors. However, over time additional areas such as mental health and psychosocial support, disability, disaster risk reduction, early recovery, protection and human rights became associated with cross-cutting issues. A strategic review commissioned by OCHA in 2013 recommends that five core issues around diversity should be considered as being cross-cutting – age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health. To limit the cross-cutting issues to five is not to say that other areas are not important – rather that these other areas already have established platforms for representation and mechanisms for support at point of delivery.

<sup>33</sup> OCHA, *Coordination and Funding of Cross-Cutting Issues in Humanitarian Action*, a strategic review commissioned by OCHA (work conducted through 2013/2014 but report undated).

IASC guidelines on gender, HIV and mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies are available, each including checklists for each sector/cluster.<sup>34</sup> NGO guidelines on age and disability are also available.<sup>35</sup>

### **b) Centrality of protection**

While protection is not considered to be one of the core cross-cutting issues, in 2013 IASC endorsed a statement affirming the commitment of IASC Principals in ensuring centrality of protection in humanitarian action.

The statement articulates i) the essential role of the humanitarian community in engaging with State and non-State parties to protect and assist people in need; ii) that protection of all persons affected and at risk must inform humanitarian decision-making and response, from preparedness efforts, throughout the duration of the humanitarian response and beyond; and iii) in practical terms this means identifying who is at risk, how and why – and taking into account the specific vulnerabilities underlying these risks, including those experienced by men, women, girls, boys and specific groups, including internally displaced people, older persons, people with disabilities and people belonging to sexual and other minority groups.

The statement also articulates that i) responsibility for placing protection at the centre of international humanitarian action lies with HCs, HCTs and all cluster coordinators; and ii) the protection cluster plays a crucial role in supporting humanitarian actors to develop protection strategies (including mainstreaming protection through all sections and coordination specialist protection services).

- Cluster and AOR coordinators have a responsibility for ensuring that protection strategies are appropriately incorporated into all phases of the HPC – needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, response implementation and monitoring, evaluation and learning, with the assistance of the protection cluster focal point.
- The UNICEF representative is ultimately responsible for ensuring that protection is appropriately addressed by all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

### **Gender-based violence**

GBV is a protection issue. In addition to co-leadership of the GBV AOR along with UNFPA, UNICEF has a responsibility for ensuring that all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs appropriately

<sup>34</sup> IASC, *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action – Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities*, December 2006; IASC, *Guidelines for Addressing HIV in Humanitarian Settings*, March 2010; IASC, *Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*, June 2007.

<sup>35</sup> HelpAge produced a series of documents on older people in emergencies in 2012/2013. Key documents include *Ensuring inclusion of older people in initial emergency needs assessments* (<[www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/ensuring-inclusion-of-older-people-in-initial-emergency-needs-assessments](http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/ensuring-inclusion-of-older-people-in-initial-emergency-needs-assessments)>); *Protection interventions for older people in emergencies* (<[www.helpage.org/resources/practical-guidelines/emergency-guidelines/](http://www.helpage.org/resources/practical-guidelines/emergency-guidelines/)>); *Nutrition interventions for older people in emergencies* (<[www.helpage.org/resources/practical-guidelines/emergency-guidelines](http://www.helpage.org/resources/practical-guidelines/emergency-guidelines)>); and *Health interventions for older people in emergencies* (available in French and English) (<[www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/health-interventions-for-older-people-in-emergencies](http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/health-interventions-for-older-people-in-emergencies)>). Further materials to support programme design and advocacy can also be found on HelpAge's website at <[www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)> and on <[www.humanitarianresponse.info/topics/age](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/topics/age)>.

Handicap International has produced a disability checklist for emergency response which includes the following sections: general guidelines, health and nutrition, water and sanitation; protection, women and children with disabilities; reconstruction and shelter; livelihoods; and education. This document and more information on disabilities in emergencies is available on <[www.handicap-international.org](http://www.handicap-international.org)>. The disability checklist may also be downloaded through the nutrition cluster website at <[www.nutritioncluster.net](http://www.nutritioncluster.net)>.

incorporate interventions to prevent and respond to GBV in all phases of the HPC (needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, response implementation and monitoring, evaluation and learning).

GBV prevention and response interventions should *not* be delayed due to a lack of solid information and reporting on incidents of GBV. Evidence continually shows that GBV will be present in situations requiring humanitarian action; therefore, the minimum set of GBV prevention and response interventions should be established right at the beginning of an emergency.

- It is the cluster and AOR coordinator's responsibility to ensure that GBV prevention and response issues are appropriately incorporated into all phases of the HPC – needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, response implementation and monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- The UNICEF representative is ultimately responsible for ensuring that GBV is appropriately addressed by all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

IASC guidelines for GBV interventions in humanitarian settings are available – including checklists and action sheets for each sector and cluster.<sup>36</sup>

### **c) Accountability to affected populations**

In 2011, the IASC Principals endorsed five Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) and agreed to incorporate accountability to affected populations into the policies and operational guidelines of their organizations and promote them among operational partners, HCTs and cluster members.

Liberia, 2014. A security guard stands by a gate at the interim care centre for children exposed to the Ebola virus. Active tracing of children's extended family was undertaken, with the goal of reuniting them with relatives after the end of the quarantine period.



<sup>36</sup> IASC, *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings*, September 2005.



South Sudan, 2011. People stand amid swirling dust in a camp for returnees in the town of Agok in what was then Southern Sudan, just before the new nation's independence.

### Five Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations

1. Leadership/governance
2. Transparency
3. Feedback and complaints
4. Participation
5. Design, monitoring and evaluation

#### *What does this mean for clusters?*

Many cluster partners, including UNICEF, already have policies and practices in place that promote accountability to affected populations. This provides a platform and opportunity to consolidate accountability to affected populations across clusters as a collective.

#### *How can country clusters enhance accountability to affected populations?*

In July 2014, the IASC Task Force on Accountability to Affected Populations gave the following suggestions on how clusters could be more accountable.<sup>37</sup>

**Leadership** – Country clusters can demonstrate CAAP by ensuring feedback and accountability mechanisms are integrated into strategies, proposals, monitoring and evaluation, by providing training and orientation on accountability to affected populations and ensuring it is included in cluster performance monitoring, and highlighted in reporting.

<sup>37</sup> IASC, *Accountability to Affected Populations – Clusters, Their Role in Enhancing Accountability to Affected Populations*, July 2014.

**Transparency** – Clusters regularly prepare situation reports and updates for OCHA, donors and CLA headquarters, and input into a wide variety of humanitarian system documents. Clusters could easily transform parts of the many documents they prepare into information packages for communities. At a minimum, clusters and agencies should provide a description of the cluster’s roles and responsibility, the agency’s mandate and project(s), the population’s entitlements and rights, and when and where to access assistance.

**Feedback** – Feedback is an essential part of the accountability response and is necessary for clusters to understand if they are to meet the agreed needs and wishes of stakeholders. Clusters can support and establish common service feedback mechanisms where the cluster as a collective is fed information from the population. Feedback should then be digested and acted upon, and results of the action relayed to the population – a ‘feedback loop’. Much of this is already happening within individual organizations through agency programme cycle processes. However, the cluster has the opportunity to coordinate the process.

**Participation** – Clusters should engage with communities on decisions that affect communities and should involve them in the planning processes in terms of the response.

**Design, monitoring and evaluation** – Community participation in the design of assessments, programmes and evaluations enables affected populations to have a direct influence on decision-making and (subsequently) improving programmes.

- Cluster and AOR coordinators have a responsibility for facilitating greater engagement of the affected population in all phases of the HPC and for establishing (or adopting existing) approaches to ensure transparency and information provision, two-way communication, feedback and complaints systems and participation in decision-making processes.
- The UNICEF representative ultimately has a responsibility for ensuring that clusters and AORs enhance accountability to affected populations.

(See *Operational Framework: How to Ensure Accountability to Affected Populations in Humanitarian Emergencies* for more detailed information on entry points for the CAAP at institutional and organizational level and operationally through the HPC phases.<sup>38</sup>)

#### *How do we pull this all together operationally?*

Clearly, to incorporate the five core cross-cutting issues (age, disability, gender, HIV and mental health), centrality of protection (including GBV) and CAAP into the routine work of each cluster and AOR is a complex process. Ideally, each of these issues should be included by all clusters and AORs in each phase of the HPC. However, in reality and depending on the context of the situation, some of these issues will be more important than others.

- It is recommended that all clusters and AORs incorporate gender, age and prevention of violence, along with accountability to affected populations, as a *basic minimum* across all phases of the HPC, but that the clusters go through a process of reflection on the context of the situation to help them determine which additional issues should be incorporated into the cluster processes and routine work.
- Cluster coordinators should use the skills and expertise of the staff of relevant focal points (age, disability, gender, GBV, HIV, mental health and protection) to build understanding on these issues within the cluster and to develop and adapt tools to incorporate these issues into cluster work.

<sup>38</sup> IASC, *Operational Framework: How to Ensure Accountability to Affected Populations in Humanitarian Emergencies*, Version B1, February 2012.

## PART ONE

- Expert focal point staff should be able to support each cluster through briefings, orientation and training, adaptation of generic tools for use by each specific cluster, and mentoring of clusters as they undertake this work.
- It is important that cluster coordinators build a shared vision among cluster partners about the importance of developing programmes that ensure that the affected population has safe and equal access to quality services, including how to minimize the risk of physical and sexual violence and discrimination, and how to ensure accountability to affected populations – a people-centred approach.

Cluster dialogue on a people-centred approach would include the following:

1. How consultative are we when planning, implementing and monitoring our interventions?
2. Is the participation inclusive enough? Do we give space for girls, boys, men, women, the aged, those living with disabilities and those living with HIV to participate fully? Do we give space for groups at particular risk of physical or sexual violence or discrimination to engage in participative processes? If not, how can we improve on increasing inclusiveness of participation?
3. Are the services we provide safe and accessible for all sections of the affected population? Do we minimize risk of physical and sexual violence and discrimination? If not, how can we improve?
4. Have we set up appropriate referral mechanisms (e.g. mental health and psychosocial support, sexual and reproductive health)? If not, what referral mechanisms would be appropriate, and can we do this?
5. Can all sections and groups of the affected population provide feedback and are there complaints mechanisms in place? If not, how can we improve this?
6. What are the challenges we face in providing assistance that is safe and accessible to all? How can we address these?
7. Do our current practices comply with *basic minimum* commitments to incorporate age, gender, prevention of violence and accountability to affected populations into programming? If not, what changes would be required to incorporate these issues?

Denmark, 2013. A worker at the UNICEF Supply Division packing 20 metric tonnes of goods for the Philippines emergency response.



**Figure 1: Incorporating cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations into the HPC – a people-centred approach**



**The UNICEF representative is responsible for:**

- Oversight of work in relation to cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and CAAP in all UNICEF-led clusters and AORs; and
- Advocating, as necessary, within the HCT to ensure that the relevant practical guidance and support is made available for clusters and AORs in order for them to incorporate these issues into cluster and AOR responses.

**1.4.2 Provider of last resort**

Where a cluster is activated, the CLA must be ready to ensure provision of services to fill critical gaps that have been identified by the cluster and reflected in the HC/HCT-led SRP, when access, security and funds are in place (see Table 1 in Section 1.1, page 31).

Essentially, this means that UNICEF commits to ensuring that affected populations get required services in the clusters and AORs that UNICEF leads or co-leads, and that UNICEF is obligated to provide these services i) where they are identified by the cluster(s) as priority gaps within the context of the cluster SRP; ii) where there are no other partners in a position to provide the services; and iii) where access, security and funding allows. The POLR obligation would be activated only if advocacy with the government and other partners to provide services proves to be unsuccessful. Where a CLA is unsuccessful in fulfilling its role as POLR, the CLA will be expected to continue with advocacy efforts, to explain to the various stakeholders the constraints and justify why it is not performing as POLR.

From a programming perspective this is not so different from what is articulated in the 2010 UNICEF CCCs. CCC Section 2.1 on performance monitoring talks about monitoring progress against benchmarks, highlighting gaps, identifying where CCCs are not being met and mobilizing resources to address these gaps.<sup>39</sup> The main difference is that within the context of the cluster approach there is an obligation for UNICEF to meet these needs, and other agencies will demand that UNICEF fulfil this role. Another difference is that within the context of the cluster approach there are more target populations than those covered by UNICEF programmes. However, as CLA it is UNICEF's responsibility to act as POLR for the cluster target populations.

## 1.5 Inter-cluster coordination (CCRM Section 5)

### 1.5.1 Inter-cluster coordination

Inter-cluster coordination is the mechanism through which clusters come together at national and sub-national levels to coordinate the response through each stage of the HPC.

Good inter-cluster coordination is critical to the success of an emergency response.

The HC and HCT are responsible for setting out strategic objectives in the SRP. The strategic objectives are multi-sectoral, and inter-cluster coordination facilitates a process for clusters to work together to maximize synergies and pursue delivery of the strategic objectives in the most efficient and effective way. The HC or resident coordinator and HCT, supported by OCHA, determine the shape and function of inter-cluster coordination during a crisis.

Inter-cluster coordination encompasses supporting multi-cluster responses, i.e. ensuring strategic and operational synergies between clusters to address particular issues. For example,

i) the camp coordination and camp management, health, shelter and WASH clusters to address public health responses; ii) education and WASH cluster collaboration to address adolescent girls school dropout; and iii) food security, health, nutrition and WASH clusters to address malnutrition. Inter-cluster coordination forums also provide a platform for multi-cluster discussion on cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations and cash programming.

Inter-cluster coordination also encompasses supporting inter-cluster services and activities to enable effective humanitarian response, i.e. i) ensuring that common standards and approaches are developed and adopted (sphere core standards, feedback mechanism for affected people, needs assessment); and ii) ensuring that common information management tools are developed and available (4W matrix web platform mapping, etc.).

Much of the inter-cluster coordination is conducted through routine meetings that all clusters attend – typically also including support from an inter-cluster information management working group. However, small groups of clusters, potentially supported by members of the HCT, may also gather to discuss specific response strategies and to monitor achievements, as well as to give feedback to all clusters and to the HCT through inter-cluster coordination meetings to ensure appropriate overall linkages, as necessary.

#### **The UNICEF representative is responsible for:**

- Advocating in the HCT, as necessary, for improved inter-cluster coordination to address key strategic issues with the multi-cluster approach, e.g. in relation to malnutrition or cholera, or across all clusters in relation to inter-cluster support services and activities; and
- Promoting effective in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AORs, thus enhancing UNICEF-led cluster coherence of approach and collaboration and reducing duplication of effort on common issues. This will also promote programme integration within UNICEF.

### **1.5.2 Relationship and flow of information between the HCT and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms**

As defined in cluster guidance modules, there is a need to promote better communication and cooperation between the cluster(s) and the HCT. Actions to improve this relationship and cooperation include (but are not limited to):

- The HC or designate chairs inter-cluster coordination meetings;
- Chairs of inter-cluster fora participate in the HCT meetings to provide a link between the HCT and clusters;
- Cluster and inter-cluster meetings should be sequenced, to ensure that relevant issues are fed into the HCT effectively; and
- The HCT and inter-cluster fora share notes of their meetings.



Palestine, 2014. Boys perform gymnastic manoeuvres in a destroyed part of the Al-Shaiaf area of Gaza.

**The UNICEF representative is responsible for:**

- Advocating in the HCT, as necessary, for improved communication between the HCT and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms; and
- Ensuring good in-house two-way flow of information between the UNICEF representative and UNICEF-led cluster/AOR coordinators by means of briefing and debriefing before and after inter-cluster coordination and HCT meetings in order to endorse key messages and ensure a common understanding and position on key issues discussed during these meetings.

## 1.6 Preparedness (CCRM Section 6)

Preparedness includes any action or capacity development introduced before an emergency to improve the overall effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of a response and recovery. The IASC *Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance* have been replaced by the ERP approach, which has been adopted by the IASC.<sup>40 41</sup>

40 IASC, *Guidance for Inter-Agency Emergency Response Preparedness*, 2013.

41 The ERP approach encompasses i) risk profiling; ii) early warning monitoring; iii) minimum preparedness action; iv) contingency response planning; and v) standard operating procedures for the initial emergency response. It should be carried out at inter-agency level and then replicated at sector cluster level.



**Table 3: Responsibility for preparedness in line with the ERP approach**

CONTEXT	RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ERP	SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL CLUSTERS
Countries with an HC.	Clusters, AORs and sectors under the leadership of the HC.	To monitor implementation of ERP and overall readiness, and support clusters and sectors, as necessary.
Countries with a resident coordinator but at high risk of emergencies and requiring international support.	Sectors under the guidance of the resident coordinator, supported by the CLA. The global cluster coordinator can be called on for support in the event of an imminent emergency.	To proactively support the resident coordinator and sector coordination mechanisms, encourage and support operationalization of the ERP strategy and prioritize immediate implementation of minimum preparedness actions.
Countries with a resident coordinator at low risk of emergencies requiring international support.	Sectors under the guidance of the resident coordinator supported by the CLA.	Not expected to provide assistance unless specifically requested by the resident coordinator.

Iraq, 2014. Soldiers stand guard at a bridge over the Tigris River, as displaced Yazidis cross into Kurdistan Region.

**The UNICEF representative has a responsibility to:**

- Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters and AORs or (where appropriate) sector coordinators implement the ERP.
- Ensure quality and comprehensiveness of cluster and AOR ERP plans – with monitoring and support from global cluster coordinators, a dedicated cluster manager (when in post) or other appropriately skilled individuals in-country.
- Ensure that minimum preparedness actions are implemented by UNICEF-led clusters and AORs/sectors, including (but not limited to) arrangements for coordination. Funding for these preparedness activities should be included in the various programme and section budgets. The preparedness activities include:
  - Development of scenarios ranked by likelihood.
  - Putting in place arrangements for assessment, including accessing and collating relevant pre-crisis information from all relevant sources. Pre-crisis data should be disaggregated by age and sex for better understanding of the situation of the various groups when a crisis arises. It should also include maps and inventory of infrastructure, most likely sourced from monitoring and evaluation staff.
  - Familiarizing cluster coordinators, sector coordinators, information managers, monitoring and evaluation staff, government and programme section staff with the mechanisms and procedures to provide emergency funding for key partners (e.g. the Consolidated Appeals Process, the Central Emergency Response Fund and SRP appeals).
  - Putting in place arrangements for information management, including establishing and aligning information management systems that are compatible with emergency information needs (for example, multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessment (MIRA), SRP, indicator registry, etc.), and identification of information management contact point(s) within monitoring and evaluation sections and line ministries.
  - Identifying training needs for capacity-building on emergency preparedness and response (for government and cluster partner staff, including UNICEF's staff) and providing in-country training (by UNICEF country, regional or global offices, or by expert consultants), or outside of the country (UNICEF, OCHA, other specialized humanitarian training institutions).
  - Preparing an inventory of materials that could be used for the emergency at country/regional level and pre-identifying suppliers.
- Engage with the GCCU and ensure that cluster and sector coordinators engage with the respective global cluster coordinators for support and guidance on implementation of the ERP approach where there is a high risk of emergencies (see Table 3 above).

(See IASC Guidance on ERP for more details and a description of the ERP approach.)

## 1.7 Cluster management arrangements (CCRM Section 7)

This section refers to management arrangements *within* clusters (line management of clusters is addressed in Section 2.2, page 66).

While the CLA is accountable to the HC for the effective functioning of the cluster, it appreciates that i) an effective, efficient and well-functioning cluster requires the active participation of the CLA, cluster coordinators, information managers, donors, and cluster's partners at national and sub-national levels; and ii) that clusters are expected to cooperate with national authorities, to accept their leadership and to support national capacity, where feasible and appropriate.



Internal cluster management arrangements will vary from country to country depending on the context. However, the IASC has outlined a number of principles:

- Eligibility to participate in strategic management work of a cluster is based on i) operational relevance in the emergency; ii) technical expertise; iii) demonstrated capacity to contribute strategically and to provide practical support; and iv) commitment to contribute consistently.
- The endorsement of i) establishment of a small steering committee or strategic advisory group to provide strategic direction of cluster(s); and ii) establishment of technical working groups (small, task-orientated and time-limited) as and when required to address specific technical aspects of work.

Uganda, 2014. Sacks of maize flour donated by the World Food Programme in Nyumanzi refugee camp. At the time, some 22,000 South Sudanese refugees lived there, after having fled armed conflict in their young country in late 2013 and early 2014.

**The UNICEF representative is responsible for oversight of the cluster management arrangement (in conjunction with the cluster co-lead where this exists).**

- TORs for country clusters, sub-clusters, co-leads, strategic advisory groups and technical working groups should be developed, indicating membership, leadership and respective responsibilities.
- Where appropriate, ensure that relevant government sectors are appropriately engaged with and involved in cluster management, and where possible, co-lead the cluster.
- Guidance is available from the GCCU on development of the TORs for clusters, strategic advisory groups and technical working groups, and examples of TORs are available on request.

## 1.8 Minimum commitments for participation in clusters (CCRM Section 8)

All cluster partners, including the CLA as an implementing agency, have a shared responsibility to meet the humanitarian needs of affected people in a timely manner. The IASC has outlined 12 minimum commitments for partner participation in clusters (see below).<sup>42</sup>

### Twelve minimum commitments for partner participation in clusters

1. Commitment to humanitarian principles, the *Principles of Partnership*, cluster-specific guidance and internationally recognized programme standards, including the Secretary-General's *Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse*.
2. Commitment to mainstream protection in programme delivery (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, 'do no harm', etc.)
3. Readiness to participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected people, in line with the IASC's CAAP and the related *Operational Framework*.
4. A demonstrated understanding of the duties and responsibilities associated with membership of the cluster, as defined by IASC TORs and guidance notes, cluster-specific guidance and country cluster TORs, where available.
5. Active participation in the cluster and a commitment to consistently engage in the cluster's collective work.
6. The capacity and willingness to contribute to the cluster's SRP and activities, which must include inter-cluster coordination.
7. Commitment to mainstream key programmatic cross-cutting issues (including age, gender, the environment and HIV).
8. Commitment by a relevant senior staff member to work consistently with the cluster to fulfil its mission.
9. Commitment to work cooperatively with other cluster partners to ensure optimal and strategic use of available resources, and share information on organizational resources.
10. Willingness to take on leadership responsibilities in sub-national or working groups as needed, subject to capacity and mandate.
11. Undertake advocacy, and disseminate advocacy messages to affected communities, the host government, donors, the HCT, CLAs, the media and other audiences.
12. Ensure that the cluster provides interpretation (in an appropriate language) so that all cluster partners are able to participate, including local organizations (and national and local authorities, where appropriate).

These commitments do not seek to exclude organizations from participating in clusters or to impede participation of national authorities in cluster coordination, where appropriate.

The UNICEF representative is responsible for oversight of cluster implementation of the minimum commitments for partners in conjunction with the cluster co-lead, where this exists (see Section 1.10, page 54).

Where an implementing agency's mandate prevents it from formally participating in the cluster as a partner, it should nevertheless be encouraged to participate in coordination mechanisms, and to share information around needs and gaps in the emergency response. The cluster coordinator is responsible for facilitation of this participation.

## 1.9 Sub-national coordination (CCRM Section 9)

Sub-national emergency coordination is critical when responses take place in remote areas and/or extend over a large territory. As with national-level clusters, sub-national cluster coordination structures should only be established on the basis of operational need and should be deactivated as soon as those needs are met or when local coordination capacity is adequate.

- The sub-national cluster structure does not need to mirror the national structure – it may make sense to merge some clusters at the sub-national level while they remain separate at the national level.
- Sub-national cluster TORs should be formalized and endorsed by the CLA and clear lines of accountability between national and sub-national levels should be articulated in the TORs.
- National clusters should provide support and policy direction to sub-national clusters while links between sub-national and national clusters should:
  - Facilitate reporting, information-sharing and collaboration with national and sub-national clusters;
  - Promote coherence of national programming and overall coordination;
  - Help track trends;
  - Identify shared and common concerns in operational areas; and
  - Develop more upstream advocacy and programming strategies.

### **The UNICEF representative is responsible for:**

- Engaging in analysis and decision-making within the HCT on the establishment of sub-national clusters; and
- Overseeing the establishment and management of effective sub-national coordination structures for each of the clusters and AORs UNICEF leads or co-leads.

### **Staffing for sub-national level cluster coordination**

- In some situations – especially large-scale sudden onset emergencies, full-time cluster coordinators and information management specialists are appointed to sub-national level by the CLA.
- However, in other situations, particularly long-term protracted emergencies, cluster coordination functions could be carried out through double-hatting of a CLA staff member and/or by a partner NGO staff member. In the case of double-hatting, it is important to ensure that cluster coordination activities and allocation of time is clearly articulated in the job description and performance appraisal of individual(s), and that the UNICEF sub-national office hosting the cluster or the partner NGO hosting agency is fully aware of and committed to fulfilment of the coordination function.

## PART ONE

### Operational and administrative support for sub-national cluster coordination

As with national level cluster coordination, it is essential that UNICEF and/or the co-lead host agency provides the required operational and administrative support to enable the cluster to function effectively (see Section 2.4, page 73).

## 1.10 Sharing leadership (CCRM Section 10)

Evaluation and experience show that when cluster leadership is shared between United Nations agencies, national authorities, NGOs and other key humanitarian actors, there is stronger engagement and better coordination. Shared leadership may be at national and/or sub-national level, and essentially involves the sharing of cluster responsibilities between two or more agencies.

It must be appreciated that not all partners are willing or able to share leadership responsibilities. It is recommended that selection of agencies to take on shared leadership responsibilities should be based on the agency's:

- Operational and technical relevance in the emergency;
- Capacity to provide appropriately experienced staff; and
- Commitment to contribute consistently.

At national level, a co-lead agency should have demonstrated capacity to contribute strategically.

It must also be appreciated that while shared leadership can significantly strengthen a cluster, it does not displace the core responsibilities and accountabilities of the designated in-country CLA, including, but not limited to, POLR.

Guinea, 2015. A toddler and her caregiver, an Ebola survivor, play outdoors at a nursery. The child, whose mother died from the Ebola virus disease, was being quarantined.



The UNICEF representative is responsible for directly and proactively supporting co-leadership of clusters. It is recommended that:

- Selection of cluster co-lead agencies should be made using the criteria outlined above (Section 1.10) and through an open, transparent process, ideally reaching consensus through a consultative process within the cluster.
- LOUs and TORs be developed to ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of their respective roles, responsibilities and accountability. Examples of LOUs and TORs for shared leadership are available through the GCCU. However, those involved at country level should jointly determine which model works best for the specific context, ideally under the guidance of the HCT.
- LOUs are developed between the agencies that will co-lead the cluster(s). The LOU should outline the complementary roles played by the CLA, co-lead agency, cluster coordinators and cluster partners, and make clear to all parties how accountability, strategy, representation, advocacy, fundraising and other key functions will be managed by UNICEF and the co-leadership agency.
- It is recommended that the country representative or director of the cluster co-lead agency should participate in UNICEF cluster/representative meetings and should be actively engaged in the overall management of the respective clusters alongside the UNICEF representative (see Section 2.2.2, page 68).
- TORs are developed for individuals recruited by co-lead agencies as coordinators or co-coordinators at national or sub-national levels; the TOR should be adapted from UNICEF generic coordinator TORs, outlining the specific responsibilities and reporting lines of the co-coordinator position.

Multiple terms are used to describe shared leadership, including co-facilitator, co-coordinator, co-steward and co-lead.

The UNICEF representative should, through the HCT, encourage coherence of terminology and of approach across clusters in a situation where co-leadership is being implemented at country level, and should engage with the GCCU and global cluster coordinators for guidance on co-leadership.

### 1.10.1 Cluster co-leadership costs

Co-leadership has costs. Where a co-leadership model is desired and appropriate, it is essential that funding does not become an obstacle for the agencies interested in and committed to taking on a co-lead role.

Funds may be mobilized by an approved co-lead agency through pooled funding mechanisms and/or where appropriate through bilateral funding, as with funding for UNICEF coordinator costs (see Section 2.3.2, page 71). The UNICEF representative should advocate for donor support as and where required, both directly to donors and via the HCT.

In some situations, UNICEF mobilizes funds for cluster co-leadership. There are advantages to this approach, especially in the early stages of an emergency, until co-lead agencies make other arrangements (one request per cluster rather than several; all co-leads have the same level of support; makes some national NGOs eligible, which otherwise might not have been). However, it is recognized that this approach could lead to a false perception of UNICEF ownership of the cluster and that it is simply sub-contracting agencies to take on cluster coordination roles. It is therefore important that UNICEF work to negate this perception through ensuring a transparent, consultative process for the selection of the cluster co-lead agency.



Uganda, 2014. A Sudanese refugee woman cooks porridge in a large saucepan in Nyumanzi refugee camp, Adjumani district.

### 1.10.2 Co-leadership within the context of the AORs

At country level, the child protection and GBV AORs operate independently of the protection cluster in terms of programming. However, all of the key OCHA processes go under/through the protection cluster.

The child protection AOR is led by UNICEF and the GBV AOR is co-led by UNICEF with UNFPA. It is usual for the child protection and GBV AOR coordinators to have access to inter-cluster meetings and processes in order to represent the AORs directly, in coordination with the protection cluster coordinator.

### 1.10.3 Co-leadership in education

Save the Children will usually be the co-lead for the education cluster, mirroring the global arrangement. Locating Save the Children cluster coordination staff at UNICEF is often helpful to allow the cluster team to work effectively.

## 1.11 Monitoring cluster coordination (CCRM Section 11)

This section discusses monitoring of cluster coordination functions, not monitoring of cluster deliverables against objectives and targets outlined in the SRP.<sup>43</sup> The CCRM refers to two different cluster monitoring processes: i) CCPM and ii) the cluster coordination architecture review. This is equivalent to humanitarian performance monitoring (HPM) Pillar 3 milestone monitoring in humanitarian contexts where UNICEF has a presence but the clusters are not activated. When clusters are activated, CCPM typically feeds into the HPM Pillar 3.

CCPM is an exercise where clusters assess their performance against the six core functions of the cluster (see Section 1.4, page 35) and accountability to affected populations. Ideally, CCPM should be implemented three to six months after the onset of an emergency and annually thereafter. Ideally, it should be conducted by all clusters at the same time, but in some situations an individual cluster may wish to conduct the process at another time. While this is a country-level process, it should be supported by the Global Cluster Coordination Unit and global cluster coordinators in terms of guidance on the process and analysis of the data generated by the CCPM survey.

Cluster coordination architecture review is a process which assesses the appropriateness and relevance of cluster coordination structures in light of changes in context and strategic objectives of the SRP, and determines if clusters should continue as they are, be expanded, merge, be streamlined or transition with benchmarks for deactivation. A cluster architecture review is initiated and led by the HC/HCT and supported by OCHA. While cluster coordination architecture reviews may be informed by CCPM results, decisions on whether a cluster remains the more appropriate structure to meet identified needs must be based on analysis of changes in the humanitarian context and national coordination activity.

The UNICEF representative is responsible for oversight of monitoring of cluster coordination functions in UNICEF-led/co-led clusters. This includes:

- Where this process is being conducted by all clusters at the same time, actively participating in the planning of the CCPM through the HCT, including agreeing on an appropriate time frame for process;
- Supporting cluster coordinators to prepare for and implement the CCPM survey (discuss at UNICEF cluster/representative meetings);
- Supporting relevant corrective actions and, if needed, request support from the regional office/GCCU;
- Ensure cluster(s) monitor implementation of the CCPM action plan periodically; and
- Through the HCT, actively engaging in the planning of cluster architecture reviews and in oversight of the implementation of the review, as well as in discussion on the way forward based on the findings of the architecture review.

<sup>43</sup> Monitoring of cluster deliverables is addressed under the Cluster Function in Section 4 and more fully covered in the HPC Reference Module.



# PART TWO



# Part Two: The cluster approach – UNICEF country office responsibilities

## 2.1 Human resource mobilization for UNICEF-led clusters and AORs

**A**s outlined in IASC operational guidance,<sup>44</sup> UNICEF is responsible for ensuring the timely recruitment of adequate numbers of staff with the appropriate level of seniority, facilitation skills and technical skills to ensure effective cluster coordination, including information management.

Decisions as to how much capacity is required will depend on context. In some cases it may be feasible for programme staff to take on cluster/AOR coordinator and information management specialist roles, whereas in other situations dedicated full-time cluster coordination staff (coordinator and information management) will be necessary.

At the height of a large humanitarian crisis, it is recommended that UNICEF recruit full-time, dedicated cluster and AOR coordinators and information managers who have no other (programme) responsibilities (single-hatted). However, in smaller-scale crises and in some protracted crises, it may not be operationally or financially viable or justifiable to have dedicated cluster and AOR coordination staff. In such cases a single person may fulfil both cluster coordination and programming responsibilities (double-hatting).

Information management is *not* an optional component; rather it is an *essential* requirement for effective coordination. It is therefore imperative that the information management function for each cluster and AOR be adequately supported. While on occasion it may be possible to share information managers across clusters and AORs, this should be determined on a case-by-case basis – depending on the context, the type and scale of emergency, and the existence and capacity of the pre-emergency information management systems. For example, in some situations the child protection AOR and the education cluster share information managers – with the aim of promoting efficiencies and strategic collaboration between the two areas.

At the beginning of an emergency an analysis of cluster and AOR coordination capacity, including the information management function, should be carried out, and cluster and AOR coordination staffing needs should be identified.

A clear strategy for staffing of clusters and AORs should be put in place, and coordinator and information management posts should be reflected in the programme and budget review, as well as in the operational staffing matrix of the country office.

In developing the strategy for staffing of the clusters and AORs, the grades of the various positions should be determined based on the scale and complexity of the emergency and level of responsibility of the post (national or sub-national).

Transitioning back to sector coordination should also be considered at the outset. This will feed into the decision on fixed-term or temporary assignment.

Opposite: Central African Republic, 2014. A volunteer from the Central African Republic Red Cross with insecticide-treated mosquito nets at a distribution site in Bangui. Conflict in the country has affected some 4.6 million people.

<sup>44</sup> IASC, *Operational Guidance – Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster Coordinators at Country Level*, 2010.

## PART TWO

### **Recruitment of coordination staff for UNICEF-led clusters and AORs**

Cluster coordination staff (coordinators and information management specialists) recruited by UNICEF may be employed on fixed-term, temporary assignment or special service assignment contracts, depending on the context.

Where coordination staff members are recruited to full-time (single-hatted) coordination posts and where there is a clear long-term need for dedicated cluster coordination, e.g. in a protracted, complex emergency, it is preferable to move towards longer-term, fixed-term contracts.

Of course, fixed-term positions are not always appropriate, e.g. in contexts where the situational analysis indicates that cluster coordination functions will be transitioned back to sectors in a relatively short time (i.e. up to 18 months). In such situations, a temporary assignment contract would be recommended.

A special service assignment would be appropriate in the context of very short-term deployments, especially where immediate deployment is required, as the administrative process is shorter.

Paraguay, 2014. A girl plays in floodwater in Puerto Falcón, where she attends a mobile school in a temporary settlement for flood-affected people.



**Secondment of staff from operational in-country NGOs for UNICEF-led clusters and AORs**

In some situations, NGO partners from the cluster may second staff to UNICEF to fulfil coordination functions. Such an arrangement should be written into the NGO/UNICEF programme cooperation agreement, with an understanding that seconded staff members report to and are line-managed by UNICEF.

**Options for temporary/surge staff for coordination positions**

In addition to recruitment of coordination staff and secondment from in-country NGOs, a number of other options are available for country offices to source temporary/surge support, including the use of UNICEF staff<sup>45</sup> and of personnel on secondment from other agencies<sup>46</sup> (see Table 4, page 62).

**The UNICEF country office has a responsibility to:**

- Secure funding for and recruit cluster and AOR coordinators and information management specialists;
- Develop a strategy for staffing for clusters and AORs based on an analysis of capacity and need, and ensure that all cluster and AOR coordination posts are incorporated into the programme and budget review and operational staff matrix and, where appropriate, that fixed-term cluster and AOR coordination posts (for cluster coordinators and information managers) are established; and
- Inform global cluster coordinators about recruitment and invite them to be involved in the process of recruitment and orientation of cluster coordinators and information managers.

While various options for temporary surge staff provide significant support for country offices, it must be recognized that the overall responsibility for funding and recruitment of staff for clusters and AORs falls on the country offices.

- Most of the mechanisms for temporary/surge support are for relatively short periods of time, so the issue of potential loss of continuity needs to be considered seriously. It is therefore highly recommended that the short-term options are used on an interim basis while arrangements for longer-term appointments are being processed.
- It is essential that the country office starts the process of recruitment for longer-term positions as a priority at the outset of an emergency – recognizing that the temporary/surge mechanisms are gap-filling measures to support the country office until they can recruit staff.

All seconded staff should be fully integrated into the UNICEF country office and treated as equal members the UNICEF team. These staff members report to UNICEF and should be line-managed by UNICEF.

Global cluster coordinators should be involved in pre-departure orientation of temporary or surge personnel sourced from these various options.

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45 Global cluster coordinators for L3 activations and internal re-deployment for UNICEF staff from other country programmes.

46 Rapid response teams, standby partners, ProCap and GenCap staff.

**Table 4: Options for sourcing surge/temporary staff for clusters and AORs**

SOURCE	GENERAL INFORMATION	TIME FRAME BETWEEN REQUEST AND DEPLOYMENT	LENGTH OF DEPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS	COSTS	PROCESS FOR DEPLOYMENT	COMMENTS
<b>GENERIC MECHANISMS</b>						
Division of Human Resources emergency roster	The Division of Human Resources emergency roster which provides surge support to country-level clusters through internal deployments, talent pools and retirees.		Employed by UNICEF. Period of employment variable – up to three months when internal deployment – may be longer when recruited.	Country office responsible for all costs, including salary.	Request may be made to Division of Human Resources when an L3 declared or where the country is priority for fast-track recruitment.	Access to staff with knowledge and experience of UNICEF systems.
Global Cluster Coordination Unit	Global cluster coordinators and deputies are based in EMOPS Geneva.	To be available for deployment 48 hours after request. Carry United Nations Laissez Passer.	Short term – engagement in analysis/ decision-making on activation of cluster and cover coordination function as required until surge staff in place.	Salary and costs for travel to country covered by EMOPS – country office responsible for all costs in-country.	IASC L3 declaration of UNICEF corporate activation of an L3 initiates deployment of global clusters, but is tailored to requirements of existing national structures and may be limited due to access and security issues.	In priority countries where clusters are activated, the global cluster coordinators can also provide short-term surge support to fill gaps and provide technical support and capacity development if the country office and regional office resources are inadequate.
Rapid Response Mechanism	Some regions have a Rapid Response Mechanism where an internal roster is in place, consisting of pre-screened, appropriately qualified and experienced staff members with approval to be deployed to emergency missions. These individuals may have coordination, information management and/or technical skills and may be deployed within and between regions.	Variable.	Up to three months. UNICEF employee.	Receiving country office responsible for all costs including salary (salary to be reimbursed to seconding country office).	Requests made to the regional human resources emergency focal points and deployment to be approved by the country representative of the seconding country.	Familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to the post but may be less familiar with cluster coordination systems and processes.

SOURCE	GENERAL INFORMATION	TIME FRAME BETWEEN REQUEST AND DEPLOYMENT	LENGTH OF DEPLOYMENT AND STATUS	COSTS	PROCESS FOR DEPLOYMENT	COMMENTS
UNICEF internal mission	Internal UNICEF missions may be agreed through bilateral negotiation between representatives. These individuals may have coordination, information management and/or technical skills and may be deployed within and between regions.	Variable.	Usually up to three months. UNICEF employee.	Receiving country office responsible for all costs, including salary (salary to be reimbursed to seconding country).	This is a more ad-hoc arrangement than the Rapid Response Mechanism (above). The country representative makes a request and negotiates the deployment directly with the country representative from the seconding country.	Familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience familiar with cluster coordination systems and processes.
Rapid response teams	Each UNICEF-led or co-led cluster and AOR has a rapid response team, made up of high quality, rapidly deployable coordinators and information management specialists.	To be available for deployment 48 hours after request (pending visa).	Up to three months. Personnel. Employed by host agency – seconded to UNICEF through a partnership agreement. Education deploys some rapid response team personnel to in-country co-lead Save the Children.	In the case of all clusters except child protection, the GCCU will cover the cost of salary and travel to the receiving country while the country office will cover all in-country costs. In the case of the child protection AOR, the country office will cover travel to country and daily subsistence allowance (in addition to in-country costs).	Managed through the humanitarian partnership manager (EMOPS Geneva) in collaboration with the respective global cluster coordinator(s). A request form and TOR should be submitted for each request.	To some extent familiar with UNICEF systems and processes – significant understanding of cluster coordination systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to post.
Standby partners	UNICEF has developed standby partner agreements with a number of agencies, which maintain rosters of emergency surge capacity personnel for deployment, on request, to enhance UNICEF response to humanitarian crises. Standby partners include NGOs, government agencies and private companies based in several countries. The individuals on the rosters are usually employed in their home country but can take leave on short notice to be seconded to UNICEF. They may have coordination, information management and/or technical skills.	May be deployed within two weeks after request (pending visa).	Usually deployed for three to six months; in some cases up to a year. Employed by host agency – seconded to UNICEF through a partnership agreement.	Salary and costs for travel to country covered by host agency. Country office responsible for all costs in-country.	Managed through the humanitarian partnership manager (EMOPS Geneva) in consultation with global cluster coordinators. A TOR and request form should be submitted for each request.	Not familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Not familiar with cluster coordination systems and processes. Level of experience variable.

SOURCE	GENERAL INFORMATION	TIME FRAME BETWEEN REQUEST AND DEPLOYMENT	LENGTH OF DEPLOYMENT AND STATUS	COSTS	PROCESS FOR DEPLOYMENT	COMMENTS
<b>SPECIALIST MECHANISMS</b>						
ProCap	The Protection Capacity Project (ProCap) is a resource providing senior level expertise and leadership in protection through deployment of senior protection officers to humanitarian situations. ProCap officers are senior, experienced, full-time protection officers (P4/P5 level or equivalent) on permanent rotation, employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council and deployed to the HC and agencies with a protection mandate.	Aim for deployment within two weeks after request (pending visa). However, may be some delay as this goes through IASC process.	Generally a three to six month mandate. Personnel are employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council – seconded to UNICEF through partnership agreement.	The Norwegian Refugee Council covers salary and travel to country. Country office responsible for all costs in-country.	Managed through humanitarian partnership manager (EMOPS Geneva) and/or the Chief of Child Protection (UNICEF NY). A TOR and request form should be submitted for each request.	May not be familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to post.
GenCap	The Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) seeks to build capacity of humanitarian actors at country level to mainstream gender equality programming, including prevention of and response to GBV. GenCap advisers (P4/P5 level or equivalent) are employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council and are available for deployment on short notice as inter-agency resources to support the HC, HCT and cluster/sector leads in humanitarian situations.	Aim for deployment within two weeks after request (pending visa). However, may be some delay as this goes through IASC process.	Generally six to 12 months; extensions may be made up to maximum of 24 months. Personnel are employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council – seconded to UNICEF through partnership agreements.	The Norwegian Refugee Council covers salary and travel to country. Country office responsible for all costs in-country.	Managed through humanitarian partnership manager (EMOPS Geneva) and/or the Chief of Child Protection (UNICEF NY). A TOR and request form should be submitted for each request.	May not be familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to post.

### 2.1.1 The concept of 'double-hatting'

As mentioned previously (see Section 2.1, page 59), there are times when a UNICEF programme staff member functions as cluster coordinator in addition to his/her UNICEF programme responsibilities. Experience has shown that, as long as the scale of the emergency is not too great, double-hatting generally works well at sub-national level and that it can also work well at national level, where an individual with coordination experience is appointed in a double-hatted capacity. Good double-hatting can contribute to strengthening sector coordination in the longer term.

#### Recommendations in a situation of double-hatting are as follows:

- Cluster coordination responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions should be clearly articulated in the job description and in the performance appraisal of the post holder, and monitored through regular meetings with supervisor(s) to ensure that the dual role is sustained.
- A double-hatting cluster coordinator must always make it clear when speaking on behalf of and representing the cluster and when speaking on behalf of and representing UNICEF.
- Where possible, another person should represent UNICEF at meetings, especially in a situation where UNICEF is likely to take a different position from other cluster partners.
- It is absolutely essential that another person represent UNICEF where funding allocations are being made.

China, 2013. A girl writes an entry in her diary in a camp in Longmen Township, Sichuan Province, after a major earthquake laid waste to the area.



### 2.1.2 The concept of neutrality of the cluster coordinators

Cluster coordinators are employed by or seconded to UNICEF, and report to the country representative or his/her designate. Nevertheless, the cluster and AOR coordinators have an overriding duty to the partners and should act as neutral representatives of the cluster as a whole rather than as a representative of UNICEF.<sup>47</sup>

#### Neutrality of the cluster coordinator

The neutrality of the coordinator position may be promoted through:

- Appointment of a dedicated coordinator with no UNICEF programme responsibilities. This neutral position should be articulated in the coordinator's job description and performance appraisal.
- The cluster coordinator reporting to someone other than the chief of section.
- The position of neutrality of the coordinator should be clarified with partners on a regular basis, and should be backed up by practice, i.e. cluster coordinators are not expected to represent UNICEF or take on aspects of UNICEF programme work.
- UNICEF chief of section and senior staff should actively participate in cluster meetings, representing UNICEF as a cluster partner (so the cluster coordinator does not have to represent UNICEF).
- In contexts where appropriate, it is suggested that cluster offices be located outside UNICEF premises; however, it is recognized that this is not always viable due to security issues and office and operational support requirements.
- A double-hatting coordinator needs to articulate very clearly whether s/he is speaking on behalf of and representing UNICEF or speaking on behalf of and representing the cluster.

## 2.2 UNICEF line management of cluster and AOR coordinators

The IASC generic TOR for cluster coordinators<sup>48</sup> states that while the cluster and AOR coordinators have an overriding duty to all partners, they report directly to the country representative of the CLA on all issues relating to the cluster or AOR.

The UNICEF fact sheet on 'Cluster Management at Country Level'<sup>49</sup> also states that the cluster coordinators report to the UNICEF representative, although there is recognition that day-to-day reporting may be delegated to another staff member. In reality, in many places it has proved challenging for the UNICEF representative to directly manage three cluster coordinators and two AOR coordinators, along with all other country representative duties.

47 IASC, 'Joint Letter from Cluster Lead Agencies to Their Directors/Representatives at Country Level', October 2009.

48 IASC, *Operational Guidance – Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster coordinators at Country Level*, September 2010.

49 UNICEF fact sheet on 'Cluster Management at Country Level', 2011.

## PART TWO

**Table 5: Cluster and AOR coordinator reporting lines used by UNICEF – with advantages, disadvantages and recommendations**

CLUSTER COORDINATOR REPORTS TO	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	RECOMMENDATIONS
UNICEF dedicated cluster manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures cluster issues are dealt with cohesively.</li> <li>Facilitates identification of common issues across clusters and management of these issues in a coherent manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only feasible and cost effective in a large-scale emergency.</li> <li>Potential that UNICEF representative disengages from cluster work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommended</b> – where dedicated cluster manager in post.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cluster manager reports to the country representative.</li> <li>Cluster manager is also responsible for ensuring that the representative is adequately briefed on cluster-related issues.</li> <li>Cluster manager may attend the HCT with the representative but not in place of the representative.</li> <li>Important that additional periodic UNICEF representative/cluster coordinator briefings/meetings be held to allow opportunity for cluster coordinators to engage with representative, and ensure that s/he is in touch with cluster activity/issues and well placed to represent the clusters at HCT and other fora.</li> </ul>
UNICEF representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows opportunity for cluster coordinators to regularly engage with representative.</li> <li>Ensures representative in touch with cluster activity and well placed to represent cluster in the HCT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant additional workload for a country representative – especially in a large-scale emergency with equally large-scale emergency programming.</li> <li>Potential that representative just does not have the time to effectively manage the cluster and AOR coordinators.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommended</b> – where dedicated cluster manager not in post and country representative has time to effectively manage the cluster and AOR coordinators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative could also delegate some of the day-to-day management tasks to the deputy representative or emergency coordinator.</li> </ul>
Deputy representative or emergency/field coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These individuals may have more time available than the representative to commit to manage the cluster and AOR coordinators effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant additional workload for a deputy representative or emergency/field coordinator – especially in a large-scale emergency with equally large-scale emergency programming.</li> <li>Potential that these individuals do not have the time to effectively manage the cluster and AOR coordinators.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Possibly recommended</b> – as an option where no dedicated cluster manager in post and UNICEF representative does not have time to effectively manage cluster and AOR coordinators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative to select the most appropriate individual considering relevant experience and skills, potential to commit the time to do the job and level of seniority.</li> <li>Important that the manager keeps representative fully briefed and may attend the HCT with, but not in place of, representative.</li> </ul>
Chief of section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As only taking on management of one additional person, the chief of section may have time to perform the management role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common issues across all clusters may be lost/diluted/not managed coherently by CLA.</li> <li>Potential for chief of section to focus on coordinator support for UNICEF-related issues rather than the broader cluster issues.</li> <li>Each chief of section would be required to brief UNICEF representative on respective cluster issues – so another time-consuming process required.</li> <li>Potential that common issues across all clusters are lost/diluted and so not adequately represented in the HCT.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Not recommended</b> – In principle this approach is not recommended unless in a situation where the coordinator is double-hatting, in which case it is essential that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The double-hatting coordinator also regularly meets with and reports to the country representative on cluster-related activity.</li> </ul>

### **2.2.1 Decision on line management of cluster and AOR coordinators**

The decision on the best option for direct line management of UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators will be taken at country level, based on an analysis of the context and capacities, and on the following general recommendations and principles.

#### ***L3 emergencies***

In L3 emergencies, it is recommended that the UNICEF country office identify a person of an appropriate level of seniority to manage the clusters (e.g. chief of field operations) or, if the scale of response requires it, recruit a dedicated cluster manager. The manager of the clusters should work under the direct supervision of the UNICEF representative, providing strategic direction and management and ensuring streamlined and effective coordination of the UNICEF co-led clusters and AORs, and being responsible for direct line management of the cluster and AOR coordinators.

#### ***L2/1 emergencies***

In L2/1 emergencies there are two options:

1. The cluster and AOR coordinators will be directly managed by the UNICEF representative.
2. If this is not feasible, the representative should bear the following in mind when deciding how to manage the coordinators:
  - All UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators should be managed by one person to ensure coherence of approach within the UNICEF-led clusters and to ensure that issues common to all clusters are identified and addressed coherently.
  - The manager should be of an appropriate level of seniority to elicit respect and to have the capacity to manage the cluster and AOR coordinators.
  - It is essential that the manager regularly brief the representative and attend the HCT alongside the representative.
  - There should be periodic UNICEF cluster meetings with the representative and manager to give the cluster coordinators the opportunity to engage with the representative, and through this dialogue to allow him/her to gain a deeper understanding of cluster-related issues.

Where a cluster coordinator is double-hatting, it is recommended that the coordinator regularly meet with and report to the UNICEF representative on cluster-related issues (in addition to meetings with the chief of section who could be the line manager for programming business). Cluster coordination responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions should be clearly articulated in the job description and in the performance appraisal of the post holder and monitored through regular meetings with both supervisors to ensure that the dual role remains viable.

### **2.2.2 UNICEF-led cluster-manager meetings**

Regardless of whether or not the cluster coordinators are managed by the country representative, a dedicated cluster manager, the deputy representative or the emergency/field coordinator, it is essential that UNICEF cluster manager meetings be held.

It is recommended that the manager hold a regular meeting, attended by all the cluster coordinators, to review cluster and AOR progress, plans and problems, and for the manager to provide strategic guidance and direction for cluster and AOR coordinators. This meeting would give the manager and cluster coordinators the opportunity to brief/debrief on inter-cluster coordination and HCT discussions, and to ensure common understanding on position on key issues discussed during these meetings. Such a meeting will also facilitate cross-cluster and AOR communication and sharing of experience and will enhance coherence of approach and collaboration between UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

It is recommended that the cluster coordinators meet with the manager more frequently at the outset of an emergency.

It may be appropriate for the chiefs of section(s) to attend these meetings. This would foster connectedness between clusters and programmes. It would also enhance chief of section understanding on cluster priorities, and increase chief of section capacity to act as cluster officer(s)-in-charge when required.

It is also recommended that the country representative (or equivalent) of cluster and AOR co-lead agencies attend these meetings and actively engage in the overall management and strategic direction of the cluster(s). This will enhance common understanding of cluster priorities.

Where the cluster coordinators are managed by someone other than the UNICEF representative (i.e. a dedicated cluster manager, the deputy representative or the emergency/field coordinator) it is recommended that the UNICEF representative periodically attends these meetings to give the cluster coordinators the opportunity to engage with the representative, and through this dialogue to allow the representative to gain a greater depth of understanding of cluster-related issues.

As and when appropriate, the manager may hold separate meetings with individual cluster coordinators to address specific issues that are only of relevance to that cluster, and issues related to performance of a cluster coordinator.

### **2.2.3 Monitoring of cluster performance and cluster function**

Monitoring of cluster performance against strategic objectives and targets (covered in Section 1.4, page 35) is conducted by the cluster partners and consolidated by the cluster coordinator, who reports to OCHA and to the CLA manager and/or country representative.

Monitoring of the cluster coordination function (covered in Section 1.11, page 57) is carried out by the cluster coordinator on a periodic basis under the guidance of the HCT, and again, this is reported to the CLA manager and the country representative.

The UNICEF-led cluster manager is responsible for reviewing the cluster monitoring reports (both regular performance monitoring and periodic coordination function monitoring) and taking corrective measures, as required. The UNICEF regular MoRES in humanitarian action should feed into and align, as far as possible, with the SRP monitoring framework.

### **2.2.4 The UNICEF representative's attendance at cluster and AOR coordination meetings**

It is strongly recommended that the UNICEF representative periodically attend cluster and AOR meetings to:

- Support the cluster and AOR coordinator(s);
- Illustrate to cluster partners UNICEF commitment to the cluster(s) and AOR as a CLA;
- Engage in key strategic discussions with cluster and AOR partners, e.g. advocacy on increasing geographical coverage of response, partners taking on a co-leadership role, etc.; and
- Remain in touch with the dynamics of each of the UNICEF-led clusters and AORs.

It would be appropriate for the UNICEF representative and/or the dedicated cluster manager (where in post) to attend cluster and AOR meetings.

It is also recommended that the UNICEF representative encourage the heads of cluster and AOR co-lead agencies to participate in the respective cluster and AOR meetings.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The heads of cluster co-lead agency attendance at cluster meetings is recommended with the same rationale as UNICEF representative's attendance: to show support for the coordinator(s) and commitment to the partners, to engage in strategic discussion and to be in touch with the dynamics of the cluster(s).

### 2.2.5 The UNICEF representative representing the clusters and AORs in the HCT

According to IASC *HCT Guidance* (2009), HCT members should be represented at the highest level. For UNICEF, this is the country representative.

As outlined in the Introduction (see page 7), the UNICEF representative has a dual responsibility in the HCT, through all phases of the response, to represent the interests of UNICEF as an organization, and to represent the interests of the UNICEF-led clusters and AORs. This dual role can be a very challenging task as:

- The UNICEF representative needs to clearly differentiate when speaking on behalf of UNICEF and when speaking on behalf of the various cluster(s).
- The UNICEF representative is expected to speak knowledgeably about cluster issues. It is therefore essential that the representative is well briefed and updated on the activities, progress, plans and issues for each of the clusters and AORs that UNICEF leads.
- Where UNICEF co-leads, it is recommended that the UNICEF representative and equivalent in the co-lead agency agree on representation of the cluster in the HCT, and consult on strategic issues.

#### Recommendations:

- Where in post, the dedicated cluster manager attends the HCT together with the UNICEF representative but *not* in place of the representative.
- Where the deputy representative or the emergency/field coordinator is responsible for management of the clusters, this individual attends the HCT together with the country representative, again *not* in place of the representative.
- Specific cluster coordinators should (on request) attend HCT meetings to provide technical and operational expertise on specific thematic/technical issues.
- It is also suggested that UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators periodically have the opportunity to attend HCT meetings as observers, to gain a better understanding of the dynamic of the HCT. UNICEF cluster coordinator attendance at HCT meetings could be rotated, with the coordinator who attends also taking some responsibility to report back/brief on the meeting to the other UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators.

### 2.2.6 The UNICEF representative representing clusters and AORs at UNICEF emergency management team conference calls

The UNICEF representative has a responsibility for ensuring that cluster- and AOR-related issues are included in the agenda of emergency management team calls chaired by the global emergency coordinator. As with HCT representation, it is essential that the representative is up to date and well-informed on activities, progress, plans and issues for each of the clusters and AORs.

Country cluster coordinators should also attend these meetings, or may be represented by the dedicated cluster manager (where in post) or the manager of the cluster coordinators (when this is someone other than the country representative).

## 2.3 UNICEF programmes working with clusters

### 2.3.1 Advantages of well-functioning clusters to UNICEF

In addition to meeting its obligation as CLA, it is to the direct advantage of UNICEF programmes to ensure well-functioning clusters.



- Strong, functional clusters will ultimately strengthen UNICEF emergency programme responses, better enabling UNICEF programmes to reach their objectives and targets. The benefits of efficiencies achieved through coordination include strengthened collective advocacy, shared tools and resources and access to a broader range of partners and allies.
- As clusters transition to sector coordination, the respective UNICEF programme sections will become responsible for supporting coordination functions with the relevant ministries/ government bodies, and thus involvement in the cluster processes and mechanisms will enhance smooth transition, sustainability and institutional knowledge.

South Sudan, 2015. A UNICEF worker stands in front of a group of children who are being released from the SSDA Cobra Faction armed group, in Pibor, Jonglei State.

### 2.3.2 UNICEF programme section participation in the cluster

The chief of section(s) represents UNICEF in the cluster(s) and:

- Actively participates in all aspects of cluster processes and mechanisms as an implementing partner of the cluster;
- Where a strategic advisory group is formed, is expected to be member of this group; and
- Is expected to act as officer-in-charge for the cluster when the coordinator is not in the duty station or when there is no co-lead.



Liberia, 2015. UNICEF staff converse amid buckets and other items that are part of school infection prevention and control kits in a warehouse in Monrovia.

UNICEF technical staff members from section(s) participate in cluster(s):

- Relevant technical staff members from UNICEF sections should attend cluster meetings and participate in relevant processes.
- Where technical working groups are formed, appropriately experienced/skilled UNICEF technical staff should proactively participate in these groups, and where the appropriate level of technical capacity exists, UNICEF should play a key role in leadership within these groups.

### **2.3.3 Cluster and AOR coordinator participation in section meetings**

It is recommended that cluster coordinators participate in UNICEF programme section meetings. This will clearly facilitate cluster/section collaboration and coordination. However, it is important that the agendas are organized in such a way that cluster and AOR coordinators do not sit through long meetings where much of the discussion is not relevant.

### **2.3.4 Programme and cluster/AOR staff collaboration**

Good collaboration between the cluster/AOR coordinator and chief of section and other relevant programme staff members is essential for a well-functioning cluster/AOR.

#### ***1. Cluster and AOR coordination activities in annual work plans***

Cluster and AOR coordination activities should be included in the annual work plans of each of the programme sections. This will mean that humanitarian coordination activities will be explained transparently, resulting in subsequent ease of allocation and release of funds against the articulated activities and monitoring of progress within the context of the UNICEF annual work plan.

## **2. Funding for cluster and AOR coordination functions**

Funding for cluster coordination functions (salaries and core activities) should be included in UNICEF project submissions to the SRP and in the relevant project proposals submitted through the various pooled funding mechanisms (e.g. Central Emergency Response Fund, Common Humanitarian Fund) and also, when appropriate,<sup>51</sup> in UNICEF programme proposals submitted to bilateral donors. Funding may also be requested from UNICEF emergency programme funds managed by EMOPS (although this must be reimbursed).

Regardless of whether coordination staff members are dedicated, full-time cluster staff or are double-hatting with a dual role supporting UNICEF programmes and clusters, cluster coordination costs must be clearly calculated and transparently outlined in the various budgets.

## **3. Release of cluster funding**

Cluster coordination finance is in the section's respective budgets and the release of funds requires the authorization of the budget holder/chief of section.

Where cluster coordination functions are conducted under the auspices of government ministries, finances will be allocated to the respective government offices through the normal processes. In such a situation, coordination and good collaboration between ministry officials and cluster coordinators are required for release of finance to cover cluster functions.

In some situations, disbursement of cluster funding is directly through UNICEF rather than through a government ministry. In such a situation it is essential that budget holders/chiefs of sections and cluster coordinators collaborate/work together on cluster-related budget issues, to ensure release of funds as required. It is also important that the mechanisms for release of funding are straightforward and streamlined, that the processes are made clear to the cluster coordinators (many of whom do not have experience of UNICEF processes), and that the various sections facilitate timely disbursement of cluster funding, with an appreciation that (sometimes) cluster activities are organized at short notice.

## **4. Avoiding duplication and streamlining**

Programme and cluster staff should work together to avoid duplication and foster streamlining of information management and other reporting formats and administrative processes that cluster and UNICEF partners may participate in, e.g. in relation to assessments, putting together situation reports and monitoring and evaluation of partner projects.

## **5. Coordination of administrative support functions**

Programme and cluster staff should coordinate administrative functions to ensure shared resources are effectively used and that there is mutual understanding and agreement on work priorities of shared staff.

## **2.4 UNICEF operational and administrative support for clusters**

As UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are established in-country, clearly there is a need for UNICEF to scale up administrative and logistical functions to ensure the office has the capacity to provide the required level of support for effective cluster coordination.

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51 Where a large percentage of UNICEF programme has an emergency focus.

UNICEF is accountable to the HC and emergency relief coordinator for effective cluster coordination of all UNICEF-led and co-led clusters and AORs at country level. Therefore, it is essential that UNICEF country office support for clusters be viewed as an *essential* and equal part of UNICEF emergency response and *not* as secondary support for UNICEF programmes.

Operational and administrative support for clusters includes:

- Suitable office space and furnishing for cluster coordination teams to work effectively and to meet with partners. While cluster office space located outside UNICEF premises may increase a perception of neutrality and impartiality of clusters, this should be balanced against the level of support the clusters will require from UNICEF, e.g. generator, water and office support services, and how viable this is outside UNICEF premises. Where possible, locate co-lead cluster coordination staff at UNICEF, to allow the cluster team to work effectively.
- Adequate communication and information technology equipment and technical support.
- Technical support to establish and maintain a cluster/AOR website where an information manager may not be in post or does not have the required technical assistance. The primary web platform for field-level cluster websites is <www.humanitarianresponse.info>. Where new websites are being established, this is the platform that should be used. Where country cluster websites exist on other platforms, UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are encouraged to consider transition to the new platform. Assistance for establishment or transition of country cluster websites should be available through the OCHA information management office in-country.
- Adequate logistics support, including transport, with an appreciation that cluster staff are often expected to work after normal office working hours and will require transport, especially in a situation where public transport or taxis are not available, authorized or safe to use.
- Facilitating access to translation services, as necessary.
- An appropriate level of administrative support should be made available. Options include:
  - The appointment of an administrative officer to provide administrative support to all clusters (this model has been successful in some country offices).
  - An administrative officer from the programme section to perform a dual function, providing administrative support for both programme and cluster. In this case, it will be important to ensure that (as with double-hatting cluster coordinators and information managers) cluster-related responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions are clearly articulated in the job description and performance appraisal of the post holder. Clearly, where cluster and programme sections share staff it will be essential that very good collaborative working relationships be established between the cluster coordinator, the chief of section and senior technical staff.
- While it is appreciated that, in the early stages of an acute onset emergency, operational and administrative support services for the cluster(s) may be less than optimal, nevertheless it is the responsibility of the UNICEF representative to ensure that the various sections of the organization prioritize provision of operational and administrative support services for effective coordination as soon as possible.

## 2.5 UNICEF cluster meetings

It is essential that space be created to allow cluster-related issues to be adequately discussed and addressed within UNICEF, to ultimately enhance UNICEF support of cluster coordination.<sup>52</sup> The specific purpose of UNICEF cluster meetings would be to:

- Keep the agency informed/updated on cluster progress against key milestones, cluster plans and problems/issues; and

## PART TWO

- Cohesively address cluster support issues related to human resources, supplies, logistics, finance, etc.

Three options to create the space are suggested:

1. Cluster issues could be included as a regular item on the agenda of UNICEF country office regular weekly meetings or, where it exists, on the agenda of the UNICEF country office emergency task force/emergency management team meeting (usually a weekly meeting), with cluster coordinators and information managers attending.

*Disadvantages:* There is a risk that time might not be allocated to address the cluster issues adequately and that cluster staff may spend a lot of time attending a meeting where much of the agenda is not relevant to them.

2. UNICEF cluster meetings could be held periodically (recommended twice monthly in early stages of emergency, possibly changing to monthly as the situation stabilizes), chaired by the UNICEF representative and attended by the dedicated cluster manager (where in post), cluster coordinators and information managers, emergency/field coordinators and other key emergency staff, along with the deputy representative and chiefs of sections for programmes and operations.

*Disadvantage:* Yet another meeting for chiefs of sections to attend.

3. Alternate emergency task force/emergency management team meetings with UNICEF cluster meetings.

This last option negates some of the potential disadvantages outlined above.

Indonesia, 2014.  
A teacher and her  
students in Aceh, 10  
years after a massive  
earthquake struck off  
the coast, triggering a  
tsunami.



# Annex One: Timeline

## Timeline for specific actions of UNICEF country representative and country office to support cluster and AOR coordination functions for L3 emergencies

Please note that where the cluster approach is established in an L2 emergency the responsibilities and actions will be the same. However, the timeline in the initial stages may be slightly different.

EVENT AND TIMELINE	UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE AND COUNTRY OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLUSTER AND AOR COORDINATION FUNCTIONS FOR L3 EMERGENCY
Pre-crisis	<p>Through the HCT or the United Nations country team the UNICEF representative should actively engage in inter-agency situational analysis and ERP actions.</p> <p>Oversight of appropriate implementation of ERP actions, including Minimum Preparedness Action (MPA) in UNICEF-led clusters where they exist; or with UNICEF programme staff and sectors (where clusters not established).</p>
<b>Start of event: Sudden onset crisis – L3 event occurred: Protracted crisis – L3 declared</b>	
First 24 hours	<p>Where clusters already exist/are activated, review coordination capacity in place for UNICEF-led and co-led clusters/AORs.</p> <p>Where clusters do not exist, discuss internally and with relevant partners on the ground what UNICEF should recommend in terms of coordination/activation.</p> <p>The L3 event may imply deployment of global cluster coordinators through the Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism. If clusters are already in place and/or the situation requires a more staggered approach (e.g. high security environment), country office to discuss with EMOPS what priorities and support needed.</p>
First 48 hours (and activities listed above)	<p>Engage in discussion and decision-making within HCT and United Nations country team on strategic objectives of the response and agree on i) activation of clusters and ii) selection of CLAs in country with, if needed, support/guidance from the GCCU.</p> <p>Contact Department of Human Resources (operational staffing matrix) regarding surge requirements for cluster coordination staff (cluster coordination and information management).</p> <p>Review available funding in country programme budgets and source additional funding as required to cover costs of surge staff for coordination function in the short term.</p>

EVENT AND TIMELINE	UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE AND COUNTRY OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLUSTER AND AOR COORDINATION FUNCTIONS FOR L3 EMERGENCY
Week one (and activities listed above)	<p>Engage in discussion and decision-making within HCT on the response and on cluster coordination mechanisms – including i) the establishment of sub-national-level clusters where appropriate; ii) shared leadership with NGOs; and iii) internal cluster management arrangements/mechanism.</p> <p>Provide mentoring, support and guidance to cluster coordinators (or those acting as such on interim basis) on establishment of cluster at national and sub-national levels as agreed at HCT, on developing shared leadership of clusters and on establishing internal cluster management mechanisms.</p> <p>Ensure that each cluster has a TOR (based on the core functions of the cluster).</p> <p>If necessary, sign off on LOUs with NGO co-lead agencies.</p> <p>Ensure the programme budget review reflects cluster coordination functions.</p> <p>Implement/operationalize strategies for secondment of staff from in-country NGOs (for both the short and medium term) where this has been agreed as part of preparedness action.</p> <p>Begin process of recruitment of longer-term positions to replace the temporary staff that has been provided as surge.</p> <p>Ensure that cluster coordination functions are adequately costed and included in resource mobilization processes.</p> <p>Support and guide cluster coordinator to i) work with partners to develop preliminary cluster strategy and response plan with preliminary targets – ensuring inclusion of cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection and accountability to affected populations; and ii) establish basic information management tools – partner contact lists, 4/5Ws of partner activity – in line with cluster strategy and plan.</p>
Week two (and activities listed above)	<p>Actively engage with HCT on all response and cluster coordination business.</p> <p>Support inter-cluster joint needs assessments, if required, and adjustment to response plan, as required.</p> <p>Support and guide cluster coordinator to collect, compile, monitor and report on progress of cluster response against cluster plan – in line with reporting schedule of OCHA – HAPs and MoRES to be aligned to this process/format.</p> <p>Advocacy on cluster-related issues as required within HCT, with donors and with government.</p> <p>Establish regular meetings between UNICEF-led cluster coordinators and the manager of the cluster coordinators, and between cluster coordinators and other sections in UNICEF.</p> <p>Ensure cluster/programme collaboration and cooperation through various processes (country offices attend regular cluster/manager meetings, cluster coordinators attend section meetings etc.).</p>

## ANNEX ONE

EVENT AND TIMELINE	UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE AND COUNTRY OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLUSTER AND AOR COORDINATION FUNCTIONS FOR L3 EMERGENCY
Following weeks (and activities listed above)	<p>Supportive supervision of cluster coordinators – mentoring and guidance of cluster work – in line with humanitarian action processes and mechanisms – participation in inter-cluster needs assessments, SRP, etc.</p> <p>Monitoring of cluster work – against plans and targets.</p> <p>Advocacy as required, e.g. funding and capacity gaps for clusters.</p> <p>Monitor recruitment of cluster staff in line with human resources strategy and liaise with relevant offices to ensure timely recruitment of cluster staff .</p>
After 3 months (and activities listed above)	<p>Monitoring of cluster coordination function – Cluster Performance Monitoring Process – all clusters to complete CCPM within 3 and 6 months of cluster activation, and annually thereafter.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate capacity-building and preparedness actions are incorporated into cluster plans – and funding secured for implementation.</p>

Liberia, 2014. A health worker at a newly built Ebola treatment unit in Monrovia.



# Annex Two: Reference materials

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- <http://cpwg.net>
- <http://educationcluster.net>
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- [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)
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- [www.humanitarianresponse.info](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info)
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- <http://nutritioncluster.net>
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