



FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER

Strengthening Humanitarian Response

Global Meeting of Food Security Cluster Partners



5-6 November 2013

Rome, Italy

REPORT

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Executive Summary

The Global Meeting of Food Security Cluster (FSC) Partners was held from 5 to 6 November 2013 in Rome, Italy. The meeting brought together more than 60 participants and observers representing over 25 different partner agencies. The overall purpose of the meeting was to review the work of the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) through 2013 and to identify priority areas for 2014.

The more detailed objectives of the two day meeting, included:

- Assessing progress and agreeing priorities for the next 6 months, for each of the four Working Groups of the gFSC;
- Reviewing gFSC achievements to date (in line with the 2013-14 Strategic Plan) and initial feedback from partners on specific gFSC activities;
- Understanding the approach and next steps involved for the Food Security Cluster Evaluation, including countries to be visited by the Evaluation Team;
- Comparing and learning from various successful coordination models in different regions (Bangladesh, Southern Turkey, Afghanistan and Somalia);
- Updating partners on the Transformative Agenda (TA) and discussing how the gFSC and its partners can support strategic response planning and enhanced accountability to affected populations at the national level;
- Reviewing current coordination challenges and opportunities related to the Syria Crisis; and
- Identifying any additional emerging priorities for the gFSC to focus attention on over the next six months.

The meeting was facilitated by a variety of gFSC partners, each of whom guided specific sessions based on their technical knowledge and areas of expertise. The above objectives were all achieved, through a combination of informative presentations and robust dialogue amongst meeting participants.

Of particular note was the number of meeting participants from active national clusters; and their unique ability to provide insights into how different coordination models are working in practice. This cross-fertilization of in-country experience produced a very rich discussion, with technical depth, throughout the meeting proceedings. Meeting participants had the opportunity to better understand how the breadth of work across food security clusters varies by context and region, as well as the specific approaches and tools being deployed to enhance coordination at country level.

A greater knowledge of the key components of the Transformative Agenda and what they mean, specifically, for food security cluster coordination was also ascertained. Participants agreed that good quality programming and a focus on optimizing coordination, are the fundamental means by which the objectives of the Transformative Agenda can be taken forward at the national level. In addition, some very specific examples of mechanisms for promoting accountability to affected populations were shared.

Participants had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the Evaluation Team's Theory of Change, which will be the conceptual underpinning for the global Food Security Cluster evaluation. Meeting participants also expressed their willingness to support the implementation of the evaluation, by facilitating contacts with relevant staff in-country for upcoming field visits.

Throughout the meeting, participants provided guidance to the gFSC Global Support Team (GST) on specific follow-up actions they felt to be necessary, to continue to improve the performance of the food security cluster.

Activities already proposed for 2014, in line with the gFSC Strategic Plan, were endorsed by meeting participants. In addition, consensus was reached on the need to pursue the following emerging priorities, over the next six months:

- 1) To form an ad-hoc Cash and Voucher Working Group, with the task of defining a strategy for discussion with gFSC partners at the next global meeting;
- 2) To adapt the current Assessment Working Group into a Programme Quality Working Group, with the newly constituted Working Group to determine clear targets for the next six months (likely to include collaboration with the urban working group and specific activities vis-à-vis accountability to affected populations);
- 3) For the GST to lead efforts on identifying the commonalities across different national cluster coordination models and determining modalities for facilitating cross-fertilization of knowledge across national clusters (e.g. case studies, face to face information exchange, etc.);
- 4) For gFSC NGO partners actively responding to the Syria Crisis to convene a conference (for which the gFSC could provide support), in order to: (a) identify regional best practices, (b) discuss the unique opportunities for cash programming, and (c) review activities being undertaken and/or future requirements on accountability to affected populations; and
- 5) For the GST to explore the possibility of having one global meeting a year hosted in a region (rather than in Rome or Geneva), with a greater focus on operational issues and exchange and learning across national clusters.

Opening & Welcome

Graham Farmer, gFSC Coordinator

Graham Farmer, gFSC Global Coordinator, officially opened the meeting on behalf of the two lead agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and extended a warm welcome to all meeting participants present for the 5th Global Meeting of the Food Security Cluster Partners.

Graham noted that WFP and FAO continue to lead the gFSC cluster with one voice and that this has been aided by the significant amount of time the Emergency Directors of both organizations are spending together at HQ and in the field. In fact, Dominique Burgeon (FAO) and David Katruud (WFP) are unable to be present to open this global meeting, as they are together in Jordan on business related to the Syria Crisis.

He noted the steadily increasing country focus, at each global meeting since the cluster became operational in April 2011; evidenced at this meeting with representatives from national clusters in Somalia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Haiti, Sudan and Southern Turkey (Syria).

He emphasized that the purpose of the global meeting is to review what everyone around the room is doing, both at the global and country level, and to ensure that the cluster's collective efforts continue to be well focused strategically and aimed towards enhancing food security coordination and national cluster performance.

He highlighted that the meeting would begin with feedback from each of the gFSC Working Groups (each of whom met yesterday) and then proceed into additional substantive sessions. Meeting sessions on Day One would include a review of gFSC achievements to date, an update on the gFSC Evaluation, and comparative case studies of cluster efforts in Bangladesh, Southern Turkey, Afghanistan and Somalia. On Day Two, the gFSC Coordinator explained that meeting participants would have the opportunity to discuss the Transformative Agenda and what it means for food security clusters at the national level; coordination challenges and opportunities related to the Syria Crisis; as well as dedicate time to identifying any emerging priority areas that the gFSC should focus on early in 2014.

Report-Back from Technical Working Groups

As decided during the establishment of the gFSC technical working groups, the day prior to the Global Meeting of Food Security Cluster Partners is reserved for face-to-face meetings of current Working Groups (WGs). The three Working Groups that met were: (1) The Assessment Working Group; (2) The Food Security & Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group; and (3) The Inter-Cluster Food and Nutrition Working Group¹.

Each WG reviewed progress to date through 2013, assessed if a continuation of the WG was required, and if so, began to identify specific areas of focus for 2014. Feedback from the chairs and co-chairs of each of the three working groups was provided in open plenary.

Assessment Working Group

Co-Chair: Rosella Bottone, WFP

Co-Chair: Vincent Annoni, Impact Initiatives

¹ A summary report of each WG face to face meeting can be found in Annex 3.

The Assessment Working Group reported back on two concrete tasks, agreed at the last global meeting. The first task was to develop a common list of outcome and output indicators that could be used at cluster level. This list has been shared with partners and feedback was received regarding several indicators that require further clarification (e.g. food assistance) and the need to disaggregate each indicator. In addition, partners noted the need to include an indicator on market based interventions, as well as a mechanism for tracking engagement in cash and voucher programmes (e.g. involvement of traders / shopkeepers).

The second task was to develop a one-page leaflet / guidance note on each indicator; outlining what the indicator is, key issues, etc. The working group informed meeting participants that a draft leaflet output has also been shared with partners for feedback. The Assessment Working Group agreed to update the indicators and leaflets based on the feedback received to date and to circulate an updated version to partners. Partners were requested to provide feedback on the field utility of both products.

During discussions, working group members also identified a number of improvements to make the existing inventory of assessment tools more 'user friendly'. The Assessment Working Group also noted what they saw as an opportunity to build on the Food Security Assessment conducted in Bangladesh. Some best practice approaches were observed which the working group felt could be replicated (e.g. tools and methodology to build a question bank). In addition, the working group felt that these successes could also be built on in future (e.g. by linking the questions to the common list of gFSC indicators and eventually the resulting strategy / response).

Moving forward, the Assessment Working Group felt that the scope of activities of the group and the TOR should be revisited. Specifically, the group felt that there was an opportunity for collaboration with the Urban Working Group and/or an opportunity to broaden the scope of the Assessment Working Group's focus to include monitoring and response analysis.

It was agreed that the working group would have less frequent teleconferences in future (i.e. once every three months), and that the group would commit to having a one day meeting before the next global meeting (details of which to be determined). Three co-chairs were also agreed for the next six months: Vincent Annoni, Impact Initiatives; Davina Jeffery, Save the Children and Philippa Young, Oxfam.

Plenary Discussion

Following the Assessment Working Group presentation, a number of issues were raised by Partners, during open plenary discussions, including:

- A request from Somalia that the Assessment Working Group provide guidance addressing the gap when a crisis is evolving, but before such time that an actual assessment can be implemented. It was noted that many use the MIRA as a fall back.
- Other colleagues from Afghanistan did not see the above gap as problematic, noting that they have found the IPC framework and indicators to be sufficient. However, they raised an additional need for indicators with regard to transitional shocks resulting from population vulnerabilities.
- Oxfam noted that they have a 48 hour tool, intended to fill the gap before being able to conduct a more robust assessment. This tool allows a team to be briefed in a few hours and then sent out to gather sufficient information upon which to base an initial design (e.g. first few weeks / months) until full programme design is complete. It was proposed that this tool could be reviewed, updated and shared with partners.
- OCHA then enquired as to whether or not the Assessment Working Group activities are linked to the indicator registry which has just gone on line. The working group confirmed that a link is present, however, they also noted that additional work is necessary to cross-tag with other sector indicators.
- Finally, Bangladesh shared the challenges they encounter in timing an assessment during a slow onset. They expressed a desire for further guidance and input on how to set triggers from the Assessment Working Group.

In closing the Assessment Working Group noted that the development of common indicators is a living process, and that they will need to be continually updated based on the collective experience of partners across the food security cluster.

Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group

Chair: Allister Clewlow, Samaritan's Purse

The Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group reported back on their achievements. The Chair first noted that the role of the working group remains focused on the connection between food security and urban settings and that the working group's aim is to build capacity around urban food security issues through: (1) Information exchange; (2) Coordination; and (3) Outreach.

The considerable interest in the urban topic from within the cluster, was highlighted, with 25 people attending the Urban Working Group meeting and 6-7 core members taking the work forward between global meetings.

The most significant achievement of the working group to date has been the creation of an interactive map on the urban webpage, where the activities of approximately one third of the gFSC partners are represented. The map is designed to ensure that small organizations, in the field, can access information about who is doing what on urban operations.

The Urban Working Group requested that partners send case studies of good examples of urban activities in the field, in support of the working group's information sharing objective. The working group committed to circulating an example case study to all partners, in order to stimulate their input. The Urban Working Group also noted that there are many current opportunities for collaboration on urban issues and guidance that partners should be aware of, including: the IFRC Urban DRR project; a WFP Asia Region Facebook initiative; the IASC/ MHCUA framework; as well as a formal multi-year WFP / gFSC proposal on "Adapting Food Security Systems and Tools to an Urban World".

Several ongoing initiatives of the WG were highlighted, these included: (1) the development of a common list of food security indicators that are specific to urban contexts (the WG is targeting a simple list of 10 triggers)²; (2) providing expertise to in-country urban initiatives (e.g. input on partner strategy formulation); and (3) encouraging in-country dialogue on urban issues through the creation of Urban Working Groups at the country level (e.g. Somalia).

Going forward it was also suggested that consideration be given to the Urban Working Group collaborating with the Assessment Working Group, in particular regarding the identification of specific urban indicators and their eventual incorporation into assessment tools.

Plenary Discussion

Following the Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group presentation, a number of comments and questions were raised by meeting participants. These included:

- The high interest and intent to form an Urban Working Group in Afghanistan, along with the opportunity for this working group to inform and guide a new two year NRC initiative on urban settings and food security. It was noted that this would be an interesting initiative for the gFSC to follow, in particular given the rapid urbanization rate in Kabul and the food security profile in country. It was also noted that any eventual Urban Working Group at national level should also work closely with the Cash and Vouchers Working Group, as it is anticipated that this modality will be very relevant in Afghanistan's urban contexts.

² Core Urban Working Group members are liaising with different projects working on guidance / indicators (e.g. Concern Kenya IDSUE Project, Oxford Urban Food Security Trigger Indicators, etc.)

- The chair of the Urban Working Group noted the future opportunity to extend the outreach of the working group, including the World Urban Forum in Columbia in 2014.
- Finally, OCHA enquired as to whether or not the Urban Working Group had linkages with or awareness of other initiatives in other clusters on urban issues. The Urban Working Group committed to reaching out to urban groups within other clusters.
- WFP also expressed its satisfaction to see strong academic links being forged by the Urban Working Group (e.g. Oxford), noting that this would bring additional credibility to any future advocacy efforts on urban issues.

Inter-Cluster Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

Co-Chair: Hilary Dhliwayo-Motsiri, IFRC

The Inter-Cluster Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition recapped for meeting participants that it was created with the intention of providing operational/coordination/technical direction and guidance to the gFSC on key areas of synergy between the Nutrition and Food Security Clusters in humanitarian responses. In addition, that the Working Group's primary objective is to facilitate better coordination between field level food security and nutrition clusters.

The Working Group has focused on two main deliverables since its inception: (1) a field survey to identify the present coordination field practices between the Food Security and Nutrition Clusters, as well as synergies, complementarities, gaps and limitations; and (2) a letter on mandates, roles and responsibilities emphasizing working principles and linkages between the two clusters, to be signed by both the Nutrition and Food Security global Cluster Coordinators. In addition, a number of joint activities have been implemented at the global cluster level (e.g. joint cluster coordinator trainings, joint missions, reciprocal participation in Food Security Cluster and Nutrition Cluster global meetings, joint input into the ECHO funded FAO Capacity Building Project, etc.)

Despite these successes, it was noted that the power to convene, as well as the strategic focus of the Food Security and Nutrition WG, has relaxed in recent months. An unequal level of participation in the WG across the two clusters has also resulted. Therefore, over the next six months it was proposed that the WG be revitalized through: (a) identifying a procedure to elect a new Chair and Co-Chair for the inter-cluster WG; and (b) increasing WG participation by the global Nutrition Cluster (gNC), by raising the issue with the gNC Strategic Advisory Group.

Assuming the inter-cluster WG is revitalized, expected deliverables over the next six months are likely to include:

- Additional follow-up on tasks related to the ECHO-funded FAO Capacity Building Project for joint Food Security & Nutrition responses;
- Mainstreaming the nutrition component into existing Food Security Cluster SOPs for Level 3 Emergencies; and
- Devising joint Food Security & Nutrition strategic objectives that could assist national partners with the new CAP process of Strategic Response Planning (SRP).

Plenary Discussion

During open plenary discussions, the gFSC Coordinator noted that the joint letter on roles and responsibilities was already signed by the global Nutrition Cluster and would be signed by the global Food Security Cluster this week. He noted that the letter highlights synergies and complementarities between the two clusters and outlines ways of providing joint support at national level.

The gFSC Coordinator also encouraged the global Nutrition Cluster to consider identifying new members for the inter-cluster Working Group from the national level, rather than solely from the global level. Strong participation in the inter-cluster working group, at both levels, would also serve to reinforce the messages being communicated during joint trainings and joint missions.

Finally, Graham noted that the intention behind the creation of all of the gFSC Working Groups was for them to be a mechanism to address specific technical questions, through the provision of products and guidance that can be used at the country level. As such, in the future, if a working group has met its TORs and does not identify additional deliverables and/or activities that would be value added to the cluster at global and national level; then the working group can and should be disbanded.

Review of gFSC achievements 2013

Presenter: Graham Farmer, Global Food Security Cluster Coordinator

Background Documents:

- Global Food Security Cluster 2013-2014 Strategic Plan
- Global Food Security Cluster Work Plan
- Global Food Security Global Survey

Expected Outcome: Overview of gFSC achievements and challenges faced from April 2013 – November 2013

The key achievements of the global cluster for 2013 to date were shared with partners across each of the four gFSC results areas: (1) capacity development in support of national clusters; (2) information management and learning; (3) operational and surge support to national clusters; and (4) advocacy, communications and partnership. In addition, the Coordinator shared some highlights of feedback that partners have provided via survey, relevant to each results area, providing additional indications of where attention may need to be placed by the gFSC going forward.

As a backdrop to the review by results area, Graham first shared some insights regarding the changing shape of the gFSC Global Partners Meetings, as well as the changing nature of the Global Support Team (GST). In addition, he updated partners on the clusters funding situation over time.

Regarding the changing shape of the gFSC Global Partners Meetings, he emphasized the increasing component of national cluster representation that has been growing at each successive global meeting since the clusters inception in 2011. Graham also tabled a proposal for consideration by partners, as to whether or not one global meeting per year should be held out in the regions, in order to continue to nurture national level participation and exchange of learning.

Regarding the Global Support Team, Graham first informed partners of the structure of the team (Coordinator plus programme team, operations team and administrative support) and highlighted for all meeting participants the new members who have recently joined the GST. In addition, he informed participants of the upcoming retirement of the Senior Programme Officer, in January 2014, and himself as Global Coordinator, in March 2014. He encouraged all partners to watch for the upcoming FAO announcement of the Global Coordinator post and requested partner's collaboration in ensuring a strong complement of candidates. He further noted that the selection panel will be composed of UN and non-UN representatives, in keeping with the diverse composition of the gFSC membership.

Regarding the funding situation of the gFSC, Graham shared an illustration representing the overall cash flow experienced by the cluster since inception. He drew partners' attention to the fact that in April of 2013 there was a significant dip in funds available, due to the cluster's ECHO grant concluding and a delay in other anticipated funds arriving. As such, this resulted in a subsequent delay on a number of planned cluster activities, which will become evident when each results area is reviewed.

Capacity Development in Support of National Clusters

The first results area includes training at the country level and for individuals, with the objective of ensuring that capacity building efforts reach a broad target audience. Face to face trainings focus on: (a) developing individuals to fulfil key cluster roles (e.g. Coordinator and Information Manager); (b) ensuring the delivery of quality programmes, and (c) facilitating general capacity development regarding food security response coordination. In 2013, the gFSC was also targeting introducing e-learning modules, in order to open opportunities to a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

Graham noted that this results area has been hardest hit by the cluster's reduced resources. Therefore, a strategic decision was taken to focus on providing support to countries directly, in the form of missions; and to put live training and the introduction of e-learning modules on hold until additional funds were received.

He further shared that based on the feedback provided by Partners, the value of investing in training remains very clear to the gFSC. 53% of survey respondents rated Country Level National Cluster Trainings as "Essential" or "Very Useful"; and 39% rated Country Level Quality Programming Trainings as "Essential" or "Very Useful". No respondents rated the trainings as "Not very useful" or "Not needed". Therefore, the intention is to accelerate training activities in 2014.

Information Management and Learning

The second results area includes management of relevant data (on cluster operations / activities, as well as on cluster performance), compilation of lessons learned, sharing of best practices and maintaining relevant Working Groups that contribute to the continual improvement of the quality of food security preparedness, response and transition.

Graham noted that the cluster's performance across this results area had been stronger and that the team has picked up following a slight gap early in 2013, with all deliverables now on track for year end. He highlighted the re-vamped gFSC website and exploration of social media / networking approaches, as a platform for lessons learned; along with the activities implemented at country and global level on monitoring coordination performance.

As was evidenced by the earlier presentations from each of the three gFSC Working Groups, the WGs continue to be a critical instrument for driving achievements within the information management and learning results area.

In closing, Graham noted that there is an opportunity in this results area, identified through Partner feedback, to make gFSC products more user friendly moving forward. Specifically, 27% of respondents noted that the SOPs are not user friendly and 17% of respondents noted that the Handbook is not user friendly. Graham concluded that surveying Partners will continue to be a very useful tool for fine-tuning work across this and other results areas in the future.

Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters

The third results area includes demand driven capacity support missions; surge deployments in response to humanitarian crises; and roster deployments. All of these activities are expected to contribute significantly to improving humanitarian food security delivery in country by: strengthening accountabilities and leadership of

the country clusters; supporting coordinated quality programming; and enhancing overall coordination and efficiency of in-country responses.

Graham noted that this results area is where the cluster is performing the strongest. In fact, the cluster is ahead of planned delivery regarding support missions and surge support. He further noted that one of the issues flagged through Partner feedback, as requiring attention, is to fine tune the mechanisms for how operational and surge support is provided to national clusters. Specifically, 30% of respondents noted that the clarity of the Memoranda of Understanding TORs and expectations, “Do not meet expectations”. Graham emphasized that bringing in more partners through MOUs in the future will be important to increasing reach, ownership and effectiveness under this results area.

Advocacy, Communication and Partnership

The fourth and final results area includes internal and external communications to enhance coordination systems and build partnerships, as well as communications to influence policy and stimulate resource mobilisation. Work in this results area enhances support, awareness and links between and among global and national food security partners, as well as donors, other clusters and the wider IASC community.

Graham reported that the cluster is also ahead of plan across this results area, with the exception of a lag in internal GST team retreats which were reduced due to the resource constraints mentioned earlier. He highlighted that the cluster continues to be actively engaged at the global level with a voice in the Transformative Agenda and CAP process revision. He emphasized how the global meetings are evolving positively and the critical need to continue prioritizing partnership across the cluster as it is partnership that generates ownership at the global and country levels for the work of the gFSC.

Overall, partners see work in this results area to be on track. In terms of partner feedback on the global meetings, 33% of respondents noted a desire for more attention on strategic discussion during future global meetings, while 92% affirmed that the focus on networking and idea exchange was at an “appropriate level” or “very good”, indicating that this feature of the global meetings should be maintained in future.

Plenary Discussion

The floor was opened for meeting participants to comment on the gFSC achievements presented by the Coordinator. The following themes were discussed:

- ***What the cluster means by ‘quality programming’.*** In particular, if it is inclusive of assessment, in addition to gender and protection; and where cash is relative to other quality programming issues. The Coordinator clarified that what is intended is ‘Support to Quality Programming’ and therefore, how the cluster can support institutions that are members of national clusters to deliver better quality work at the country level, taking into consideration what are often referred to as ‘cross-cutting issues’. Regarding cash, it was suggested that this be discussed in greater detail during the final session of the workshop on emerging priorities, as it was a topic of discussion at the last global meeting, however, actions tabled for consideration (e.g. whether or not to form a Working Group, exploration of a secondment from CaLP) were not concluded.
- ***The criteria used to select participants for cluster Coordinator trainings,*** in particular if individuals have not yet fulfilled that role in-country. It was noted that cluster coordinator turnover is a real challenge. Those already in the positions are natural candidates for the trainings. The GST has also concluded that those whom cluster partners feel would be good candidates for the roles are also good candidates for the training, despite the fact that they may well be deployed to deliver their own organizational response, rather than be available for deployment under the gFSC. In either case, it still means that a better trained individual is present during the response – whether it is in a coordinating or contributing role.

- ***The overall finances required to support the activities of the gFSC and how they compare to other clusters and align with gFSC performance.*** It was explained that the gFSC required ~2.5M USD per year to implement the endorsed work plan. In addition, that half of these funds are directed to team costs and the other half are required to implement the various activities proposed. It was also noted that it is difficult to compare the gFSC funding requirements to other clusters given that the gFSC structure is centralized and mainstreamed and as such, all resources are consolidated. During this discussion, OCHA noted the good reputation that the gFSC has built in a very short period of time, on a number of issues and that the point of enquiring regarding the finances was in no means to question the size of the team – in fact, it is likely a driving factor of why the cluster has been so successful and able to consistently support national clusters on the ground.
- ***The ‘demand driven’ nature of support missions.*** It was clarified that support missions can be requested by cluster coordinators, partners, or lead agencies. At times, it has also been the Global Support Team (GST) that engages in outreach and makes an effort to stimulate demand in a geographic area where needs are identified (e.g. Gaziantep, Central African Republic). The GST also shared the fact that, ironically, it is often the stronger clusters that are requesting support as they know what they need; whereas weaker clusters are sometimes uncertain or reserved about requesting support.
- ***The value of partner feedback and the need to explore a variety of modalities for gathering additional input.*** It was noted that there has been a relatively low response rate to the partner survey to date. Several partners suggested that survey fatigue may well be a contributing factor at the moment. Given how valuable the feedback to date has been, it was suggested that the gFSC may also want to explore other means for soliciting additional input from partners.

Overall, meeting participants endorsed the achievements presented and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the activities implemented by the gFSC to date. To close the discussion, the gFSC Global Coordinator noted that all meeting participants and their respective organizations have put significant time and resources into the work of the gFSC and that this, along with the support of valued donors, is what has contributed to the cluster’s achievements and success during the year to date.

Evaluation Team Update

Presenter: Julia Steets, Team Leader, Global Public Policy Institute

Background Documents:

- FSC Evaluation TORs, 25.09.2013
- Concept Note on the Joint Evaluation of Food Security cluster coordination, April 2013

The goal of this session was to provide meeting participants with an update on the gFSC evaluation, which is already in progress. The Evaluation Team leader, Julia Steets, first explained briefly what the Evaluation Team would be looking at and how. In addition, she solicited comments and feedback from meeting participants on the evaluation team’s approach, and requested broad support for the implementation of the evaluation.

Julia began by walking through the Theory of Change (TOC) that was developed by the Evaluation Team, which intends to articulate what the gFSC aims to achieve. Key aspects drawn out in the TOC include the cluster’s interest in supporting the country level and somehow improving the food security situation in-country, by improving the way humanitarian actors operate in the field. In addition, it draws out how the global level supports the national level (i.e. different channels being used to transfer normative guidance and learning); and different aspects that are expected to be seen as evidence of change stimulated by the gFSC.

She emphasized that the TOC is what guided the development of the key questions for the evaluation.

Three primary guidance questions have been developed by the Evaluation Team:

- (1) What effects do food security clusters or other coordination solutions at country and local level have on humanitarian organizations and their activities? How and Why?
- (2) What effects does the global food security cluster have on coordination mechanisms and humanitarian actors at country and local level? How and why?
- (3) Is there any evidence that changes in humanitarian practice resulting from activities of coordination mechanisms have any positive impact on food security needs?

The countries selected for field visits, along with the criteria that led to their selection were also shared with meeting participants (e.g. diversity of coordination set-ups, diversity of humanitarian situations and excluding countries that have already been “over-evaluated”). Selected countries include: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Turkey, Yemen, Mali, Central African Republic, Kenya and Haiti. Julia requested assistance from gFSC members to facilitate field visits planned through until the end of February, as well as to encourage colleagues to respond to the planned CO level survey.

Finally, she informed meeting participants that the Evaluation Team would be working on the results until the end of May, including dialogue on preliminary findings with key stakeholders; with the report being completed by July for presentation at the various Executive Boards in the Fall of 2014.

Plenary Discussion

Following the presentation a number of clarification questions and points of feedback were raised with the Evaluation Team Leader. These included:

- **Confirming the scope of the evaluators’ line of enquiry.** Specifically, whether or not the evaluators will look at how the gFSC cluster interacts with other clusters and points of learning / best practice from other clusters. Julia confirmed that this would be explored at the country level.
- **Clarifying why Somalia was not one of the countries selected for a field visit by the evaluation team.** The Evaluation Team Leader confirmed that they felt Somalia had been evaluated numerous times already and that another evaluation would be a burden to the country team.
- **Identifying a number of parallel evaluations, that could be relevant for the team.** Meeting participants flagged for the Team Leader an upcoming review of humanitarian coordination to be conducted by OCHA in Bangladesh; as well as an ECHO review of food security cluster and IPC activities across Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, exploring lessons learned and benefits at the regional level.
- **Understanding the composition of the Evaluation Team.** It was explained that the Evaluation Team consists of: Julia Steets, the Team Leader, who works for the Global Public Policy Institute; along with two additional senior evaluators and one junior evaluator providing the team support.
- **How to maximize NGO engagement in the evaluation process.** Partners requested that the Evaluation Team circulate information on the purpose of upcoming field visits and the evaluation team’s desired engagement with country level staff, as soon as possible, so that gFSC representatives can be in touch with country colleagues and encourage strong collaboration.
- **Providing feedback on the Theory of Change (TOC).** It was noted that the relationships and involvement of the partners in the work of the cluster was perhaps more complex and/or subtle than that illustrated in the TOC. The Evaluation Team Leader confirmed that the TOC is intended to simplify and outline the main channels of change inferred by the gFSC strategy and modalities of working. The team did take care to be explicit in the visuals regarding the composition and roles present within the gFSC (e.g. partners and lead agencies), however, the evaluation team leader also noted that perhaps the visual doesn’t quite capture the bottom-up flow from country level to the global level.
- **Providing feedback on the evaluation questions.** It was raised that the current framing of the evaluation questions leave room only for positive change, rather than holding open space for negative effects. The Evaluation Team Leader shared that this is an outcome of having derived

the evaluation questions from the TOC, which is biased, by construction, towards what the cluster aims to achieve. The feedback provided was well noted, and Julia assured meeting participants that the evaluators would absolutely be looking for both positive and negative effects of the work of the cluster.

Coordination Solutions

Panel Members:

Adeel Khan, GOAL, Gaziantep
Ben Mascall, NCMU, Antakya
Rosanne Marchesich, Co-Chair, Bangladesh FSC
Jannat Noor, Oxfam, Bangladesh FSC

Background Documents:

- Report from 8-13 April Gaziantep and Anatakya, Food Security Coordination Support Mission
- gFSC Inter Agency Assessment Presentation on the Tropical Storm Mohasen in Bangladesh
- FSC Contingency Plan on Cyclones in the South, July 2013
- Lessons Learned Report and Presentations from Bangladesh and Gaziantep

Expected Outcome: An improved understanding of ways to coordinate in different national contexts.

This session aimed to draw on two national case studies – Bangladesh and Southern Turkey (Gaziantep) – to learn about alternative coordination arrangements within specific country contexts. The presentations and subsequent discussions were meant to facilitate information and experience sharing, allowing meeting participants to identify similarities and differences in their own approaches to coordination currently being deployed in the field.

Rosanne Marchesich & Jannat Noor - Bangladesh

The current coordination structure in Bangladesh and how the Food Security Cluster (FSC) aligns with existing government structures, was outlined for meeting participants. Presenters noted that the success of the current cluster stems from the gFSC mission at the end of 2011 / early 2012 where the decision was taken that the FSC would be set-up within the existing national structures. Specifically, the local consultative groups (LCGs), which then have links to other relevant government structures (i.e. NDMC, IMDMCC, etc.). Presenters also noted that these strategic groups (the LCGs) link the disaster management cycle from resilience to development; which facilitates humanitarian and development work being complementary in nature and ensures that the clusters are working in line with the long term strategic objectives of the government.

Other key features of the FSC collaboration with the Bangladesh government and other humanitarian clusters were highlighted, such as: the delivery oriented nature of government meetings; the active engagement of key line Ministries in the clusters and the importance with which they view coordination; and the effective communications exchanges across clusters and with the HCTT (of which government are members). The role of the Bangladesh government was also explained. Specifically, that the government is the lead on triggers and the first to collect primary data and respond to an emergency; after which the humanitarian clusters are called in to fill gaps.

The country's experience with the Mahasen Tropical Storm was also discussed. Presenters noted that there was significant pressure for the both the government and the cluster system to prepare and perform well, given the significant global media coverage. The Mahasen prompted the government of Bangladesh to revisit their preparedness plans and has resulted in the FSC cyclone plan complementing the government contingency plan

and eventual SOPs. Key strengths of the Bangladesh FSC and its members were also shared with participants. These included: the recent needs assessment lead by the FSC with active engagement of FSC members and other NGOs; the standardization of food and cash packages across clusters and government; as well as the FSC's coordination capacity and strong interactions with other humanitarian clusters.

Adeel Khan and Ben Mascall – Southern Turkey (Gaziantep)

Presenters outlined how the Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group (FSLWG) arose, building on the NGO Forum created in January 2013. The NGO Forum was established to enhance coordination between the ~12 NGOs running cross border operations to service affected populations in Northern Syria. Given the limited coordination occurring bi-laterally or at a thematic level at the time; the NGO Forum conducted a 3W's exercise and then started forming various sector working groups, including the FSLWG.

A gFSC scoping mission arrived in April 2013 to work with actors on the ground and assess what was already in place with the NGO Forum, as well as how that could be strengthened and adapted to serve a more inclusive set of actors. Presenters noted that the existing capacity of the gFSC for deploying on time and seconding staff was very valuable, as well as the existing relationships that the gFSC has with other key actors. The gFSC presence contributed to producing seamless connectivity between what NGOs were doing before, when the UN came on board. The current NGO co-chair, GOAL, also noted the relationship of mutual understanding and respect formed between co-chairs and lead agencies, as important to the success to date.

The unique nature of the operational context was also shared with meeting participants. Daily changes in access, security and intervention options made coordination efforts very challenging. Therefore, a "light but effective coordination solution" was requested by partners. In addition, the working group had to proceed in a highly sensitive and responsive manner, with great attention to confidentiality of information. Presenters also noted the critical need for quality programming in complex settings such as Southern Turkey / Syria.

Over time, the FSLWG was able to build its community through regular meetings that provided strategic direction and a sense of common purpose among its diverse partners. Key lessons learned from the Turkey experience thus far include that:

- A coordination solution is possible within a non-cluster environment by drawing on the technical resources and capabilities available from cluster lead agencies and partners;
- GST rapid deployment and follow-up capacity can be an enabling element;
- Quality programming can be integrated into highly complex operations, in particular if practical resources are prepositioned; and
- Relationship building is a critical success factor for effective coordination on the ground.

Looking forward the Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group expects to focus on: collaborative assessments and capacity building initiatives to develop the Strategic Response Plan; linkages with other working groups (e.g. urban, assessment and cash) at local and global levels; expanding coordination solutions; and maintaining the trust based relationship that has been critical to the FSLWG's success to date.

Plenary Discussion

The plenary discussion addressed numerous questions and issues. Key themes explored by meeting participants, regarding the experience in Bangladesh included:

- ***Lessons from the high level of engagement between the government in Bangladesh and the cluster system.*** Meeting participants working in Afghanistan indicated interest to learn more about the governance arrangements in Bangladesh, as it could inform the expected ‘transition phase’ upcoming in Afghanistan where the cluster system is anticipated to downsize as the government develops more of its own capacity. The Bangladesh experience suggests that both can also work well together (e.g. Clusters and Line Ministries).
- ***Benefits of strong links with government, as seen in other coordination contexts.*** Long run benefits in terms of joint ownership for cluster products were noted by Sudan. In addition, participants from Haiti shared their experience of the cluster transitioning out and the government now leading coordination - with some support re: information exchange being provided through a consultative group.
- ***How phasing is managed between the Bangladesh government and the FSC.*** Presenters noted that the FSC is currently working on improving triggers for different phases after the onset of an emergency, however, today decisions are taken by group in meetings with involvement of all FSC members, including government.
- ***Striking a balance between supporting strong government involvement, without compromising humanitarian actors’ ability to influence government.*** Bangladesh participants noted that the FSC in Bangladesh is with a “small ‘c’” and that a lot of the focus is on preparedness work and capacity building. When talking about ‘transition’ the FSC doesn’t view the government as a separate entity, they are part of the FSC and HTCC and therefore sitting at the table at technical meetings, analysing IPC data alongside other UN/NGO cluster members, endorsing decisions on when to do a needs assessment, etc. The FSC does still provide a platform for NGOs and INGOs to voice issues (e.g. delays in approvals for implementation) and the government has demonstrated being responsive in taking up such issues. Colleagues also noted that the Bangladesh government is providing the humanitarian community with data, using their own separate emergency response budget for initial response and that the government is not seeking additional support through the CAP, but rather via HTCC meetings. This being said, a “small ‘c’” role is expected to be there for some time, given the population density and the number of slow onset scenarios in country.
- ***Notable successes in Bangladesh, given the strong link between the humanitarian and development structure.*** Two examples of the benefits of the strong linkages between the humanitarian and development structures were highlighted. A large project has been developed for building resilience along with sectoral strategies for resilience related to food and nutrition security; and many of the cluster members are working with the government re: Disaster Risk Reduction.

Key themes explored by meeting participants, regarding the experience in Southern Turkey included:

- ***The challenges in moving from an informal NGO based coordination model to a more formalized, holistic coordination structure.*** It was noted that this is particularly difficult to do while maintaining participation, commitment and confidence of all NGO members. In particular in complex operational contexts such as Southern Turkey, where many NGOs are not registered with Turkish authorities and/or do not have clearance from the Syrian regime to work cross-border. Therefore, appropriate and restricted information sharing (internally and externally) is critical to ensuring safety of staff. Key success factors facilitating the transition to date have been demonstrating value added services / outputs in order to gain trust and confidence of NGOs and other partners; and investing in relationship building and consultation.
- ***Creating a safe space for information sharing, balancing the desire to be inclusive with the need for confidentiality / staff safety.*** NGO Forum members were keen to share information at a sufficiently granular level to allow for activities to be coordinated at a micro level. However, once the UN arrived, not all were confident to share information with OCHA and/or broader cluster members. Different strategies have been deployed, including neutralizing the name of various

NGOs when consolidating information, however, this also presents practical limitations for effective coordination. It was noted that currently the working group is a voluntary forum, whereby NGOs indicate interest in membership and are then invited through closed e-mails. The working group also takes care to prevent information from leaking out to unintended audiences, commits to not sharing information beyond what is necessary for operational planning and operates on the assumption that all e-mails are likely being monitored.

- ***How the ‘Transformative Agenda’ is being discussed / interpreted in Turkey.*** The gFSC Coordinator noted that in the Turkey context, as well as many others, many working group / cluster members may not even be aware of the ‘Transformative Agenda’, as such. However, this is not important if what is happening in practice is that people are regularly sitting around the table in coordination fora at the local level and that the gFSC is supporting the identification of appropriate, needs based, coordination solutions to be put in place.
- ***Whether or not there is a parallel structure for refugees in Turkey and/or other working groups (e.g. cash and vouchers), despite coordination challenges.*** Regarding a parallel structure for refugees, presenters noted that the Turkish authorities see the situation in Turkey as their responsibility. The working group focus is on northern Syria for a few reasons, including the fact that very few members have the ability and/or interest to work with refugees. Most are focused on cross-border operations in any case. Regarding additional working groups, at present there is not a cash working group, as very few actors are using this modality. However, they will base it on need in the future should a cash working group be required.
- ***Key success factors for facilitating coordination in a non-cluster environment.*** The success factors noted by the GST and colleagues in country in Southern Turkey can also be seen as confidence building steps and these are probably equally applicable to cluster environments. Experience to date suggests that three things are central: providing value added services / products; delivering quick wins (e.g. maps at sub-district level); and significant consultation with members / partners. It was felt that these three factors simply become more critical and more prominent in a non-cluster environment.
- ***A call for OCHA to review Level Three triggers / steps.*** It was noted that the situation in Syria was declared to be a Level 3 emergency in January 2013, however, this status was effectively revoked at a later stage. Meeting participants noted the importance of conducting a review, despite sensitivities, in order to learn as a system. OCHA also noted that when the Level 3 emergency was declared, the system had not yet thought about a Level 3 emergency in a slow vs. rapid onset context and what may need to change. OCHA further noted that some protocols have already been updated as well as the HPC clarified and noted the suggestion from meeting participants that there should be reviews of coordination systems in place, after three months of an emergency, to see if they are fit for purpose.
- ***The importance of a central strategic body to which inter-sectoral clusters / working groups can input and which in turn can play an advisory role.*** A possible gap regarding the current coordination model in Southern Turkey was noted, specifically that of a central structure akin to the HCT, to ensure a scenario of coordination for coordination’s sake is avoided and that strategic influence is provided on key decisions. It was noted that the NGOs did author a document expressing to donors something akin to an HTC, and that now with the arrival of Nigel Fisher as regional coordinator, a regional liaison group is expected to be established (with NGO representation) to define the response plan and ensure that funding is adequate.

Long-Term Coordination Solutions

Panel Members:

Holly Radice, INGOs Co-Coordinator, Somalia FSC

Francesco Baldo, Cluster Co-Coordinator, Somalia FSC

Cyril Lekiefs, Coordinator, Afghanistan FSAC

Mutinta Chimuka, WFP Co-Lead, Afghanistan FSAC

Background Documents:

- Lessons Learned Report and Presentations from Afghanistan and Somalia

Expected Outcome: Increased engagement with partners for integrating coordination good practices into food security interventions.

This session aimed to draw on two additional case studies from countries where long-term coordination solutions are in place – Somalia and Afghanistan. The presentations and subsequent discussions were again meant to facilitate information and experience sharing, allowing meeting participants to identify similarities and differences in their own approaches to coordination currently being deployed in the field.

Mutinta Chimuka and Cyril Lekiefs - Afghanistan

The Afghanistan presentation began by outlining the coordination structure and team make-up in-country, highlighting the following features: (a) the presence of an NGO co-chair (Islamic Relief) at the national level (alongside WFP and FAO Co-Leads), and different NGO chairs at regional levels; and (b) an active and dedicated professional in the Coordinator role, who is responsible for managing gFSC missions and two teams of international and national staff: an FSAC Coordination Team and IPC Coordination Team.

Regarding the overall governance and coordination of the Afghanistan FSAC, the following strengths and challenges were noted. Strengths include: monthly coordination meetings in Kabul; an FSAC that is active in 6 regions (containing 34 provinces) with regular coordination meetings (47 coordination meetings have occurred across the country, engaging 1185 food security individual stakeholders during the year to date); and the engagement of the Government in the response plan. Challenges include: implementation difficulties maintaining the agreed bi-weekly national level governance meetings (reduced from weekly at the beginning of 2013); the discontinuity in staff due to the six week R&R schedule and change in agency leadership at the country level; competing demands for the co-lead Agencies and the NGO co-chair; and the challenges presented by ongoing insecurity in-country.

Each of the three main areas of work of the FSAC were also reviewed with meeting participants: Information Management, Coordination of Assessments and Capacity Development. Regarding Information Management, the cluster manages a monthly dashboard, produces quarterly 3W's maps and a quarterly FSAC newsletter in English, Dari and Pashto. The cluster also provides support to provincial disaster management authorities. Challenges include the fact that data is limited to the number of beneficiaries per activity, as there is difficulty in collecting reliable data on gender and no availability of age disaggregated data.

On Coordination of Assessments, the cluster conducts a seasonal food security assessment each year (typically following the wheat harvest). The assessment has four objectives: (1) understand prevalence of food insecurity at provincial level; (2) identify most vulnerable groups at national level; (3) capture chronic and acute food insecurity (identifying shocks); and (4) capture elements of food utilization (intra-household). The scope of the assessment includes 10,000 interviews covering 8,500 households, conducted by 221 trained enumerators with field supervisors and 24 contributing NGOs.

Finally, regarding Capacity Development the FSAC is hosting several working groups, initiated in response to member demand. The cash and voucher working group and the DRR working group meet on a monthly basis and each working group is focused on information sharing and the development of good practices and guidelines. The DRR working group is also now looking at several specific issues (e.g. protection of agriculture from floods and protection of food in weather threatened environments). In addition, the cluster has developed a gender and protection toolkit with assistance from the gFSC during three support missions. The cluster is also training national partners on proposal drafting, humanitarian access and humanitarian principles.

Holly Radice and Francesco Baldo - Somalia

The Somalia presentation began by outlining how the cluster has been built on a clear mass-stakeholder governance structure with checks and balances in place. It was explained that the cluster is highly inclusive, with over 400 members at different levels of engagement and 25 local NGOs holding elected voluntary positions. Currently the cluster is looking at ways to expand some aspects of its governance for greater transparency and inclusion of the Authorities.

Regarding the cluster's approach to needs and response analysis, it was noted that the IPC evolved in the Somalia context and that Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) completes all of the analysis regarding needs assessments. Presenters noted that a holistic approach to food security needs is taken (i.e. inclusive of livelihoods, seasonality, resilience, etc.). The information management system in Somalia was also highlighted, as it is fostering two way dialogue and involves real time response planning and cluster attention to flagging response gap forecasts and early warnings with donors.

The cluster's "capacity to respond" including the cluster's constant attention to finding ways to collectively respond better and faster was also discussed. The Somalia context, defined by a prolonged humanitarian crisis (~20 years) with localized sudden onset emergencies, has required the approach in-country to be that of flexible response strategies, targets and response durations, in response to changing food security conditions. Presenters informed meeting participants that field level contingency plans are done systematically at the sub-regional level, based on early warning information. The cluster also has a strong capacity building component – for and by members - with over 800 people trained across 300 organizations. The cluster is now looking to leverage INGOs to do additional capacity building.

In closing, the Somalia cluster's approach to "getting the response right" was highlighted. There is a strong two-way relationship with donors and the Strategic Advisory Group is very much involved (e.g. providing recommendations to organizations that did not make the CAP on how to engage next time). The Somalia FSC is working on ways to increase analysis and advocacy capacity and to try to have a unified voice in encouraging cluster partners and members to coordinate.

Plenary Discussion

The plenary discussion addressed numerous questions and issues. Key themes explored by meeting participants, regarding the experience in Afghanistan included:

- ***Mechanisms within the Afghanistan cluster context for coordinating with Government Ministries.*** Colleagues noted that there is not a clear strategy of involvement of government authorities, however, they do participate in the work of the cluster at regional level. For example in one of the six regions the Provincial Department of Irrigation and Livestock is Co-Chair, whereas in other regions NGOs are co-chairing. Of course, caution is also required, as some regions are under Taliban leadership. At national level, the government is not very active, apart from involvement in capacity building activities. However, greater national authority capacity is anticipated in 2014 in the Ministry for Rural Development.
- ***Presence of other assessments by partners, to complement the national assessment described.*** Presenters noted that other agency specific assessments do occur (e.g. WFP, FEWSNET, etc.) and some cluster members do their own assessments at the local level to overcome access issues. In addition, there is a national vulnerability atlas that is used by a lot of humanitarian agencies, however, actors are still waiting for the 2011 / 2012 edition. Presenters also noted that too many assessments is not an issue outside of Kabul and that there are also other assessments outside of the lean season (e.g. qualitative pre-harvest assessment).
- ***Additional detail on the Gender and Protection Toolkit.*** Afghanistan colleagues noted that if partners are following no harm principles, then gender and protection must be considered. The culture in Afghanistan means these topics are sometimes difficult to engage on, however, the Afghanistan cluster is also learning from experiences in Pakistan and collaborating with other clusters dealing with protection. Presenters clarified that there is not a working group currently,

however, the cluster is active on both issues. GST staff also noted that 7 partners have been selected in Afghanistan for the cluster to follow how they use the toolkit and assess what changes have resulted. Presenters also explained that they have a full time gender advisor as part of the cluster, which is adding value into the quality of responses. The gFSC Coordinator noted that the global clusters' experience is that gender needs to be approached carefully; that is, not from a policing approach, but rather from the standpoint of how we can improve the quality of programming and results generated.

Key themes explored by meeting participants, regarding the experience in Somalia included:

- ***How the cluster manages 400+ representatives.*** Representatives are separated into different tiers: partners, members, observers. There is a strong presence of INGOs and leading agencies, as well as principle recipients of funds. Cluster coordinators noted, however, that just because an organization is implementing, it doesn't mean that they have strategic capacity. Monthly meetings are held with ~80–100 organizations with strategic capacity, and communication meetings are held every quarter with the larger forum of all stakeholders.
- ***Benefits and risks of dedicated needs assessment capacity.*** OCHA noted that dedicated assessment capacity is often hugely underrated by clusters. OCHA was also interested in Afghanistan's experience (e.g. if there are any challenges, such as whether the information is trusted). Presenters noted that the work of the FSNAU is cross-checked by partners and partners frequently ask to participate. Further, FSNAU covers food security and nutrition assessment and employs a good human rights based approach. They also noted that some other clusters in-country also have independent, dedicated assessment capacity.
- ***Greater detail on the types of training being provided in Somalia.*** Colleagues clarified that they offer a five day project cycle management training, where protection is integrated into project cycle management, as well as trainings on different funding mechanisms (e.g. how to do a CAP, CHF, Emergency Reserve, etc.) and training on IPC with local colleagues. The Somalia cluster has very strict SOPs for trainings offered, for example, any organization that does not attend a free training, loses the possibility to attend training for one year.

Update on Transformative Agenda

Panel Members:

Jean McCluskey, OCHA

Rosie Oglesby, ActionAid, Humanitarian Accountability Coordinator

Background Documents:

- Key Messages: The IASC Transformative Agenda
- IASC, AAP Operational Framework
- Cluster Coordination Reference Modules
- Revised Humanitarian Programme Cycle and Related Guidance

Expected Outcomes:

- To gain a deeper understanding of how the humanitarian system is addressing the new strategic planning process and to identify ways in which the gFSC can support it.
- To identify ways in which accountability can be mainstreamed into food security interventions.

The session aimed to provide an opportunity for meeting participants to discuss key aspects of the transformative agenda and implications for cluster activities / approaches at national level. In addition, a more detailed look at different approaches to ensuring accountability to affected populations was also presented, to assist cluster members in thinking about mainstreaming accountability into food security interventions.

Jean McCluskey – Transformative Agenda

Jean McCluskey opened the presentation by sharing the objectives with meeting participants. These included providing a framework on how to think about the Transformative Agenda (TA) and what it means, in operational terms, for FSC cluster coordinators; as well as an opportunity to answer specific questions raised by participants. She also emphasized that the TA is not OCHA's, it belongs to everyone in the humanitarian community; and therefore, all gFSC members should be able to talk about it in the same way.

Jean began by recapping that the TA builds on humanitarian reform efforts and aims to ensure more predictable leadership and facilitate more predictable humanitarian funding. It includes system wide response procedures and systems for level three emergencies, which attempt to simplify and clarify key requirements. The three main focal areas of the TA are: Leadership, Coordination and Accountability.

She then highlighted that the most practical documents for FSC Coordinators and members to gain an overview of the TA are the 'Chapeau & Compendium of Agreed Actions' which includes 55 action points and the 'Key Messages on the TA'. She also informed participants that there are eight 'Protocols' as part of the TA³, including a detailed 'Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level' (TA Protocol 5). However, she emphasized that it was important not to get lost in the protocols and do what works at the country level when operationalizing the TA. Fundamentally, the TA is about being more systematic, responding faster, being more efficient flexible, adaptable and accountable and being more effective due to a heightened strategic and operational focus.

Regarding accountability, she highlighted that it is important to make cluster lead agencies more accountable and that there is still work to be done in this area. She also noted that accountability includes accountability to affected populations, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following presentation. Jean also took time to ensure meeting participants understood that the TA is not just about Level 3 emergencies. While the focus of the TA has been on massive Level 3 emergencies, most of the TA – apart from the elements related to system wide activation and empowered leadership - will generally apply in non-Level 3 situations. She then shared the five criteria for a Level 3 emergency: Scale, Urgency, Complexity, Capacity and Reputational Risk.

Eleven key issues were highlighted as most relevant for cluster coordinators:

1. Clear activation rationale.
2. Time bound planning for transition / deactivation.
3. A refocus on the strategic, as well as on results and gap analysis. *(It was noted that the modified CAP process, or Strategic Response Plan (SRP), places emphasis on needs assessment and analysis and turning that into a response strategy. This is a shift from the CAP focus on being an appeal document.)*
4. Integration of Accountability.
5. Sub-national arrangements do not have to mirror national arrangements.
6. Cluster resources in emergencies (IARRM).
7. Cluster performance monitoring. *(This includes looking at the six core functions of clusters and if the coordination mechanism is functioning well; which is different from looking at the actual response delivered and its effect).*
8. Cluster Annual Review.
9. Minimum Commitments for Participation.
10. Role of clusters in preparedness.
11. Early recovery mainstreaming. *(Early recovery as an approach, not a cluster).*

Regarding operationalization of the TA at country level, Jean explained that there are now success benchmarks and a menu of indicators for use at the country level across Leadership, Coordination and Accountability. She noted that a review of coordination performance can be done at the HCT level or on an inter-cluster level or

³ 4 on Leadership, 1 on coordination, 1 on HPC responding to L3, 1 on Accountability and 1 on Preparedness.

within an individual cluster such as the FSC. In addition, simply reviewing these benchmarks and indicators provides an opportunity to understand the spirit of what the TA is all about. She also shared an example of an approach used in Yemen to quickly gather feedback on what was working and what wasn't, by using a series of 30 statements reflecting the aims of the TA that stakeholders then rated on a scale of 1-6.

The top ten tips for facilitating inter-cluster and HCT linkages were also shared with meeting participants⁴, with particular importance being given to the 1st tip of ensuring that the individual facilitating the inter-cluster coordination sits in on the HCT to ensure that information can be shared between the two entities first hand. In addition, the new diagram of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), complete with timelines and key products covering both rapid and slow onset scenarios, was shared.

In closing Jean re-emphasized that the “Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level” (TA Protocol 5) is the main source of guidance on all things coordination and regarding the Transformative Agenda. She also noted that the spirit of the Transformative Agenda is to adapt at country level to find the coordination solution that works best.

Rosie Oglesby – Accountability to Affected Populations

The objective of the next presentation on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) was to try to bring the Transformative Agenda down to the operational level and take a look at what it means in one of the three focal areas. Global level commitments on AAP were highlighted and a number of specific examples from Action Aid shared; as a means to facilitate meeting participants also sharing their own approaches to accountability in country. Key gaps and challenges to rolling out AAP commitments were also touched upon and specific areas where the FSC could play a role in future were proposed.

Rosie Oglesby began by sharing quotes from the listening project, which illustrated what AAP is and why it is important. She underlined that the intent is to put people back at the centre of humanitarian and development programmes. In practice, this means ensuring the responsible use of power; identifying diverse tools and mechanisms for soliciting beneficiary feedback and complaints; and where possible, to engage populations directly in programme design. It also implies a significant mind-set change for humanitarian actors and an emphasis on quality programming. In summary, AAP is fundamentally about doing programming well and shifting power from the agency to the community.

The five commitments on AAP, as part of the Transformative Agenda, and agreed by IASC Principals include: (1) Leadership; (2) Transparency; (3) Feedback and Complaints; (4) Participation; and (5) Design, Monitoring and Evaluation. These commitments are also closely linked to the CAAP. Underneath these commitments is an Operational Framework, which provides top line guidance on different areas where AAP should be integrated, including: Preparedness; Needs Assessment; Project Design/Response Planning; Project Implementation; Distribution & Service Delivery; and Monitoring & Evaluation. The guidance provided is top line (for example, “involve communities in needs assessment “, rather than stating how to do it), recognizing that there are multiple tools available and that the implementation of accountability measures is context specific. Rosie also noted that there are discussions within the IASC task force to look at an operational framework for specific clusters and/or the HCT.

Based on Action Aid's experience, five different elements of what AAP can look like in practice were shared with meeting participants: (1) Information Sharing; (2) Community Participation; (3) Community Scrutiny / Monitoring; (4) Two-way Communication & Feedback; and (5) Linking Advocacy to Rights.

⁴ 1. Inter-cluster Coordinator attends HCT to make linkage between the two groups. 2. Assignment of mentors to CCs from HCT. 3. Assignment of specific HCT members to specific strategic objectives (SOs). 4. Specific (and limited) Cluster Coordinators attend HCTs on thematic based meetings. 5. Agreement that chair of ICC forum participates in HCT providing a link between clusters and HCT. 6. ICC feeds issues to HCTs. 7. Standard agreement on CC/ICC – HCT meeting frequency. 8. Cluster and ICC meetings feed into HCT agenda development. 9. Cluster Coordinators feed into their Reps to influence HCT discussions. 10. Sharing of meeting notes / issues between Clusters and HCT.

Information Sharing includes sharing information about the implementing organization, the mandate of the project, specific activities, budget, and people's rights. This can be done through accountability boards, puppet theatre and a range of other techniques that explain to communities the commitments aid actors have made in terms of response delivery, to which they can be held accountable by affected populations.

Community Participation can include activities such as involving community representatives in needs assessment, participatory vulnerability and analysis planning, as well as community led distribution / project implementation. The example of a woman designed distribution system in the Zaatari Camp in Jordan was given where the systems mirrored that of a clothing store, in order to address protection and dignity issues.

Community Scrutiny / Monitoring involves providing different mechanisms through which affected populations can express their concerns and feedback. Examples were provided, such as: transparency boards sharing details of all programmes; vigilance committees (community 'watch dogs') that meet regularly to review how the project is being delivered; transparency re: bills and vouchers related to project implementation; as well as Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability groups where the hope is that people who develop skills to constructively scrutinize an aid project then have the skills to constructively scrutinize public budgets and projects as well.

An example of Two-Way Communication from the Frontline SMS project in Kenya was shared. The project intended to distribute phones and solar chargers to beneficiaries so that information on prices and weather forecasts could be shared to inform when to sell crops, as well as information on food distribution. Unexpectedly, beneficiaries also began to use this mechanism for providing feedback on distribution problems and sharing information on security risks.

On Linking Advocacy to Rights, the intent is similar to that shared under Community Scrutiny / Monitoring. That is, to provide communities with the tools, at a political level, to hold aid actors to account, with the hope that eventually communities will use these skills to hold other local actors to account. Concrete examples shared included a Pakistan women's led advocacy group and an East African citizen report on drought resilience.

Rosie then shared six specific gaps and challenges with meeting participants:

1. Limited operationalization at community level (*there are currently only pockets of good practice*);
2. Challenges of using AAP tools in conflict settings;
3. Social media, as a type of humanitarian trip advisor (*to what extent should aid actors embrace this*);
4. Interagency collaboration / coordination (*today, accountability mechanisms remain agency or project specific, which makes it very confusing for communities*);
5. Accountability is supply driven, rather than demand driven (*accountability is something we "do to communities", rather than being "led by communities"*); and
6. Follow-up / linkages (*such as giving communities a voice in decision making structures and sharing results of feedback from AAP mechanisms*).

In closing, Rosie suggested the following potential roles for the gFSC, related to AAP, going forward:

1. Tools and guidance (sector specific, adaptation for conflict settings, making tools accessible);
2. Coordinated mechanisms: between agencies and between clusters;
3. Championing accountability at the country level;
4. Innovation – in particular technologies and social media;
5. Providing communities a voice in the cluster; and
6. Joint agency approaches to promote community demand for accountability.

Plenary Discussion

The plenary discussions focused on the following points of feedback related to the Transformative Agenda and AAP:

- ***What the Transformative Agenda means for NGOs.*** OCHA explained that in three bullet points, the TA means the following for NGOs: (i) Leadership and participation in country teams – ensuring balance and strategic contributions from NGOs; (ii) Making commitments for NGOs to participate in clusters and have influence on strategic issues; and (iii) Accountability – how to be accountable within NGO programmes and feeling empowered to hold co-lead agencies and HCs accountable.
- ***Current adaptability / flexibility of the TA at national level.*** Meeting participants affirmed the values and principles expressed in the TA at the global level, but expressed concerns as to how digestible the TA is at the local level. OCHA noted the need to get messages out in terms of what the TA means for local staff and for affected populations. In addition, OCHA shared that too much of the focus to date has been on the international community and that this should be broadened to emphasize the objective of supporting national governments on areas of required transformation.
- ***Additional challenges / approaches to promoting AAP.*** Colleagues shared other challenges that they have experienced, regarding accountability. These included that manipulation of accountability can be present in some communities. In addition, many communities have a fear of accountability, and as such, tools such as complaints boxes are often empty. In addition, some felt that working with cluster partners to ensure the concept of AAP is out there by identifying entry points, may be more effective than a harmonized or centralized approach. Presenters noted that there is a difference between joint mechanisms and coordination across agencies and/or dialogue across agencies on feedback received.
- ***Afghanistan review of AAP activities in country.*** Representatives from Afghanistan shared that they had done a mapping of FSAC members and practices on accountability and that they released a report in June. It includes information on 18 agencies with operational mechanisms to increase AAP.

In closing, the gFSC Coordinator shared an observation that when we look at the operational level of the Transformative Agenda, an NGO or agency at country level would rarely use the words “Transformative Agenda” when talking with local counterparts and beneficiaries. They would however, emphasize in their communications and action the importance of Leadership, Accountability and Predictability. In practice, operationalizing the Transformative Agenda is about communicating key messages and modelling the principles the TA promotes. Meeting participants also noted that the TA is not a normative issue, rather it underlines how decision making processes and the different means of coordination need to be improved. Finally, colleagues welcomed the practical information shared on AAP and felt it raised key questions such as what the gFSC tools on accountability are; and if that toolbox is sufficient to equip coordinators to effectively encourage AAP at the national level.

Coordination Challenges & Opportunities – Syria Crisis

Panel Members:

Davina Jeffery, Save the Children
 Philippa Young, Oxfam
 Penelope Anderson, Mercy Corps

Expected Outcomes:

- An appreciation of good practices for the coordination of cash-transfer programming and food security responses.
- A better understanding on how to advocate for reduced vulnerabilities and alternative livelihood options.

The purpose of this session was to discuss ongoing response approaches from three different agencies and their experiences with coordination mechanisms for addressing the Syria crisis. Presentations were intended

to be a means for identifying any emerging good practices, sharing recommendations to enhance coordination performance and identifying future areas of opportunity for gFSC support.

Mercy Corps

Penelope Anderson began by sharing that the Mercy Corps response to the Syria crisis has a clear focus on food security. She referenced the Joint Rapid Assessment results indicating ~9M people to be at risk or acute risk of food insecurity in Northern Syria, as well as Mercy Corps' own assessment that found the number one priority to be food (with 24% of the affected population having one meal a day and the balance only 2 meals a day and with 90% of households indicating a food shortage within their homes).

With this background information, Mercy Corps noted that they wouldn't provide additional details regarding their specific projects due to confidentiality principles of the organization and further underlined that these confidentiality requirements are creating challenges for coordination (as discussed in the earlier panel re: coordination arrangements in Southern Turkey).

Mercy Corps' experience first with the NGO Forum (~10-12 NGOs involved) and subsequently with the Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group (FSLWG) (~45 actors coming to meetings) was explained. The benefits, as seen by Mercy Corps, of having a central coordination mechanism with greater breadth of participation were summarized, including: stronger information sharing; more complementary programmes; enhanced lesson learning; and collective action on key issues such as access. However, at the same time, Mercy Corps noted that the lack of confidence with some participants, results in restrictions on information sharing. As such, the NGO Forum still takes place informally before or after FSLWG meetings.

A number of daily challenges encountered by the Mercy Corps team were shared including: issues of access; insufficient information on about what is going on on the ground (specifically challenges with verifying aid delivery, as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent is not reporting or monitoring); as well as the fact that some NGOs are not registered causing confusion and/or overlap and difficulties in determining what these NGOs aim to achieve.

Mercy Corps validated the need for continued coordination efforts going forward and shared a number of recommendations for enhancing coordination effectiveness, including:

- Collecting data from implementers down to a very granular level (e.g. access / lack of access to besieged areas);
- More screening mechanisms for participation in the FSLWG meetings;
- Continuing with anonymous information submission from NGOs, but somehow identifying a mechanism through which follow-up questions can be mediated / facilitated;
- Expanding FSLWG meetings beyond information sharing to influence decision making;
- Making the Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan (SHARP) more participatory and inclusive of a clear regional vision; and
- Prioritizing a comprehensive assessment.

Oxfam

Philippa Young provided an overview of Oxfam's response to the Syria crisis. In particular, work on livelihoods in Lebanon and Jordan, through cash and voucher programmes. Oxfam outlined the complexity of the situation in Syria with: ~800K Syrian nationals registered by UNHCR; an additional 65K Palestinians holding Syrian travel documents; ~200K Syrian nationals who have not registered with UNHCR / UNRWA (therefore it is difficult to assess where they are residing); and ~300K disputed Syrians who resided in Lebanon prior to the crisis (working in seasonal / temporary jobs), who can now no longer return to Syria.

Oxfam also shared that they commissioned a survey on registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon and that the report is available. This report indicates that only 17% of refugees have some kind of income generating activities, and that there is little evidence of refugees purchasing assets or setting up businesses. The report found that there remains a high degree of dependence on main income earners and that there is significant

exploitation (racism and sexism) on the limited income earning opportunities present. Further, only 25% of school age children are attending schools. In addition, many beneficiaries are not fully informed of their rights and gathering information only by word of mouth.

The study also looked at household income and expenditures and found that the average monthly income is \$250US, whereas the average expenditures are \$520US, seeing 72% of households in debt. Household savings are usually depleted within 6 months of arrival and are covering only 1/10th of average expenses accrued. Oxfam concluded by asserting that the Ministry of Social Affairs is aware that there is a critical need to do something, as they recognize that at present there are at least 45 municipalities that are ticking bombs; therefore, a long term view is required.

Regarding coordination experiences, Oxfam shared that coordination in Lebanon is very difficult. It is hard to know who to talk to for what, as there are multiple actors, including: the Lebanon Host Community Support Programme, the Social Cohesion and Livelihoods Sector (UNDP), the FSLWG (WFP led), the Cash Working Group (UNHCR) and the Task Force on Support on Host Communities (UNDP/UNHCR); along with the possibility of another parallel structure being set up by OCHA. Philippa also noted that regional response plans are changing constantly and that there is a need to streamline and hold different coordination entities to account to ensure coherence.

In contrast, in Jordan, coordination arrangements are quite different with multiple working groups in place (food, cash, shelter, cash/NFIs and protection). In addition, there is a host community platform being proposed by UNDP, amid significant controversy. UNDP is suggesting three main steps: (1) Impact assessment; (2) Response plan by end of November; and (3) Donor consultation in December. Oxfam shared visuals of the two structures and explained that the main concern is ensuring linkages are made and that parallel structures / duplication doesn't result. Oxfam also noted that Syrians are not allowed to work in Jordan (the government prohibits any form of income generation and formal employment), therefore, it is very complicated to develop livelihoods programmes in this context.

Looking forward to coordination opportunities in Jordan, NGOs are requesting UNDP to slow down the process and better integrate different NGO partners into their steering committee and possibly integrate different activities (e.g. Food and Cash/NFI could fit into employment / Livelihood Task Force). Oxfam suggested that perhaps UNHCR should sit on the task force steering committee and also noted that there is a lack of clarity on what UNHCR and what development actors are responsible for.

Regarding opportunities for all interested actors in Lebanon, Oxfam outlined the following suggestions:

- Inclusive strategy development is called for;
- Existing groups need to promote inter-agency assessments, evaluations and studies;
- Government ministries and local organizations need to be included in coordination structures;
- A census in areas of non-registered refugees needs to be supported; and
- A clear communication strategy needs to be advocated for to avoid confusion and current word of mouth system.

Save the Children

Davina Jeffrey outlined the cash transfer programming being implemented by Save the Children inside Syria from Lebanon as well as from Jordan. She noted that it includes both conditional and unconditional cash transfers, as well as voucher activities. Save the Children noted some of the general challenges they are experiencing regarding coordination, including: lack of collaboration across sectors and agencies with different mandates; programming being based on capacity rather than appropriateness; and the fact that coordination mechanisms tend to leave out national government and national civil society actors. Regarding cash coordination specifically, the additional challenge of cash transfer programming not yet being integrated within existing humanitarian coordination mechanisms (e.g. clusters, OCHA, etc.) was also noted.

The various food security and livelihoods and formal or informal cash coordination groups present in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan were noted. Save the Children highlighted some of the great results from the FSLWG coordination efforts re: information sharing and agreeing on a minimum expenditure basket which assists with setting cash transfer rates. They also highlighted the following lessons learned from the FSLWG:

- The focus on UN implementation modalities (e.g. in-kind and e-voucher);
- Low level of understanding of cash transfer programming by WG leads and partner staff;
- Low focus on appropriateness / best practice;
- Weak involvement of local civil society; and
- Disjointed discussion and reluctance to share.

Regarding the Cash Working Groups, the best practices noted by Save the Children include the opportunity to share assessment and programme information, the production of guidance and collaboration in some key implementation areas (e.g. transfer agent negotiation). Regarding lessons learned from Save the Children's experience with the Cash WG, these included:

- Low legitimacy of Cash WG guidance among other sectors;
- Relationships between sectors /agencies hindering joint progress (e.g. one card approach developed by UNHCR, however WFP set-up own system);
- Lack of technical staff within NGO partners; and
- Weak involvement of local civil society / national government.

Davina noted a number of opportunities apparent to Save the Children, including:

- Learning from the one card approach for cash transfer programmes across sectors;
- Establishing delivery mechanisms with regional usage;
- Opportunity for regional learning and trend analysis; and
- Opportunity for piloting different cash coordination mechanisms.

In closing, Save the Children shared a number of recommendations:

- Establish where cash transfer programming (CTP) fits within existing humanitarian coordination and ensure CTP Coordination occurs across responses;
- Ensure the Cash WG guidance is systematically discussed and adopted by other sectors / WGs / clusters;
- Capacity building of sector leads on CTP and ensure CTP technical expert co-chair e.g. from partner staff;
- Facilitate platform for informal sharing of information & collaborate with National Civil Society to establish effective mechanism;
- Utilise donor influence to a) promote robust collaboration and best practice (response analysis); b) support partner technical expertise; and
- Establish relationship with national government and create clear engagement strategy regarding key issues with partners.

Plenary Discussion

Two questions were posed to participants at the opening of the plenary discussions: (1) How can we organize to ensure collaboration in a context with organizational and protection risks to sharing? and (2) How can we better support regional learning, best practice and advocacy? In response, to these questions and the presentations, a number of issues were discussed. Main themes included:

- ***The opportunity for those responding to the Syria crisis to learn from other contexts, in terms of balancing protecting humanitarian colleagues and reaching beneficiaries.*** Other complex operating environments such as Afghanistan and Somalia were referenced, noting that there are ways to share information; while mitigating risks to humanitarian workers and ensuring outreach to beneficiaries is happening in a meaningful way.
- ***Agreement on the need to formalize screening mechanisms in Southern Turkey.*** It was agreed that a system whereby NGOs identify themselves and their representatives, in advance of FSLWG meetings, could be adopted.
- ***Confirmation that a comprehensive assessment is upcoming.*** In response to the Mercy Corps recommendation for a comprehensive assessment, colleagues noted that a “go & see exercise” is anticipated to begin on 9 November, 2013, to be followed by a comprehensive assessment. However, several significant steps are required before the comprehensive assessment can proceed, so meeting participants were cautioned to be patient.
- ***Ensuring that Coordination covers all actors at field level.*** It was noted that there are many local organizations receiving funds directly from Middle Eastern donors, who the international community may not know (i.e. “untraditional” donors and “untraditional” implementing organizations) or who may not be accustomed to participating in coordination structures. A strategy is needed to address this. It was shared that a similar challenge exists in Yemen, where attempts have been made to discuss with emerging donors and implementing organizations, however, some don’t understand or adopt the notion of accountability. It was suggested that organizations can be encouraged to sit at the cluster table, even if not being “coordinated” by the cluster (i.e. observer status, to increase awareness and build understanding).
- ***Opportunity for the FSLWG to ensure that response analysis is on the table early within the WG.*** Meeting participants felt that discussion of response analysis within the FSLWG, early, may assist in mitigating donors making up front choices re: modalities and/or implementing organizations favouring modalities where they have dominant capacity.
- ***The fact that Syria may be one of the biggest opportunities to scale-up cash that the international system has seen to date.*** OCHA commented on the unique opportunities revealed by the panel presentations and underscored the need to seize on the opportunities, while appropriately recognizing the potential challenges. It was suggested that if a cash cluster / coordinator is not yet being demanded, perhaps cash expertise could be inserted into other coordination mechanisms (e.g. OCHA) to ensure opportunities are maximized. Save the Children also noted that on cash (in particular vis-à-vis a one card approach), it is vital to think beyond individual clusters and to ensure that silos are avoided. Finally, Oxfam informed meeting participants that together with Save and Concern they have jointly developed cash and market based programming SOPs. Oxfam proposed that the core diagrams for mainstreaming cash across different sectors be shared with gFSC members.

The gFSC Global Coordinator affirmed that the global cluster is in a position to support regional learning, best practice identification and advocacy. He further suggested that this topic, as well as cash in general, be revisited in the final session on emerging priorities to see if concrete actions could be identified by meeting participants, to take them both forward.

Emerging Priorities

Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of priority activities to be achieved in 2014.
- Identification of new and important food security-related themes to be included in the work plan and modalities for addressing them.

The aim of this session was to have a plenary discussion on the gFSC strategic direction for the next six months and to identify any emerging priority areas. For each new priority, key deliverables or next steps to ensure the emerging priority is successfully taken forward, were identified.

Participants were reminded that there are already agreed work plan activities under each of the gFSC's four results areas for 2014. These activities continue to be in line with the gFSC Strategic Plan and were broadly endorsed by meeting participants during the earlier meeting session on gFSC achievements. In addition, meeting participants have already agreed that the three existing gFSC Working Groups (Assessment, Urban and Nutrition) should continue, with some fine tuning of the focus and activities for each Working Group, in keeping with proposals discussed earlier in the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting session was to identify any additional gaps or opportunities that need to be addressed by the global cluster and its members, over the next six months. Based on meeting discussions thus far, meeting participants agreed that the following themes should be explored in more detail:

- Cash & Vouchers (*Modalities, infrastructure.*)
- Accountability (*How national clusters can be accountable in evolving country contexts.*)
- Diversity of clusters FS&Ag, FS&L, FS (*Underlying issue is if the cluster is delivering to the full breadth of what Food Security is.*)
- National Cluster Practices Cross-Fertilization
- Syria Meeting

Plenary Discussion

Meeting participants were first invited to have small group conversations to reflect on the entry point for each of the above emerging issues, as well as the specific deliverable or target approach the gFSC could take moving forward. These conversations were followed by a robust discussion in open plenary. Ultimately, the following actions related to the identified emerging priorities were agreed:

- ***Establish an Ad-hoc Cash and Voucher Working Group, with the task of defining a strategy for discussion with gFSC partners at the next Global Meeting.*** Participants noted that it would be important for the cluster to stay focused on the coordination aspects of cash programming, as well as capacity building and knowledge sharing; as they relate to cash in Food Security programming. Quentin Legallo, NRC, volunteered to chair the ad-hoc working group and meeting participants indicated their interest to be members of the working group.⁵
- ***Adapt the current Assessment Working Group into a Programme Quality Working Group.*** Participants agreed that the newly constituted Programme Quality Working Group would need to determine clear targets for the next six months. Further, it is expected that the areas of focus will include collaboration with the urban working group and specific activities vis-à-vis accountability to affected populations (e.g. drawing together tools and approaches currently in use across Food Security clusters and experience re: successes and failures). Participants also noted that it would be important

⁵ The following individuals volunteered to participate in the Ad-hoc Cash Working Group: Justus Liku, CARE; Hilary Motsiri, IFRC; WFP CO Myanmar; Davina Jeffrey, Save the Children; Adeel Khan/Frank McManus, GOAL ; Philippa Young, Oxfam; Junus David/Doug Brown, World Vision; and Julie Mayans, Solidarites International.

for the group to be very clear on its deliverables over the next six months, in order to ensure that the new breadth of focus of the Working Group does not dilute its impact and achievements.

- ***GST to lead efforts on identifying the commonalities across different national cluster coordination models and determining modalities for facilitating cross-fertilization of knowledge across national clusters.*** Participants suggested that case studies could be solicited and added to the current gFSC handbook, or an ideas paper could be written on the breadth of FS issues clusters are covering. Alternatively, the GST could do some initial analysis on commonalities / difference across clusters (e.g. reporting, advocacy, governance, etc.) and subsequently explore different face to face options for information and experience exchange across cluster members from different countries and regions.
- ***gFSC NGO partners currently actively responding to the Syria Crisis to convene a conference, which the gFSC could participate in and provide secretariat type support for.*** The aims of this conference would include: (a) identifying regional best practices, (b) discussing the unique opportunities for cash programming, and (c) reviewing activities being undertaken and/or future requirements on accountability to affected populations. Meeting participants also noted that pre-workshops at the regional level would also likely be required, in order to maximize the results from such a conference.
- ***GST to explore the possibility of having one global meeting a year hosted in a region, rather than in Rome or Geneva.*** Partners affirmed that there would be value in having one global meeting per year with an even greater focus on operational issues and exchange and learning across national clusters. Meeting participants did note that this may result in some discontinuity in the current dialogue at global level, as meeting participants could change (e.g. those individuals representing an member organization that would attend a Rome/Geneva gFSC event, are likely not the same as those that would be sent to a regional/country based gFSC event). Colleagues also recognized that the benefits of extending the reach of gFSC networking opportunities and introducing new perspectives to the global cluster dialogue would also be substantial.

Meeting Closure

The gFSC Coordinator noted that he was struck by the rich conversation across participants throughout the meeting – in particular the strong complement of country presentations, as well as country networking and experience sharing. He expressed his satisfaction to have the opportunity for the GST to report back to partners on progress to date and to receive their feedback and guidance on how to proceed in terms of fine-tuning the focus of the gFSC working groups, identifying additional emerging priorities and continuing to improve the way the cluster works together across global and national levels.

He noted that the tentative dates of the next gFSC Global Meeting of Partners were the 7th -9th of April, 2014. However, these dates may need to be flexible should the proposed option of a regional/country based Global Meeting be confirmed as the way to proceed.

Dominique Bourgeon, FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Director, joined meeting participants to provide closing comments on behalf of both UN co-lead agencies of the gFSC. He assured meeting participants that both Directors were aware of the important themes tabled to be discussed at this Global Meeting of gFSC Partners. In addition, both Directors were very pleased to see the strong national representation present at the meeting, as it is important to regularly confront with on the ground realities, if the global cluster support (i.e. GST here in Rome) is to stay relevant. He also suggested that it would be important to have additional representatives from preparedness focused clusters in future meetings, to contrast their experience with that of country clusters handling active emergencies.

Dominique further noted that both he and David, in their capacity as members of the Emergency Directors Group, had spent much time together in the field (e.g. CAR, DRC over last three weeks and Pakistan and Syria earlier in the year). He explained that during each mission they have been looking at the entire coordination structure, followed by a deeper dive on the FSC. He further noted that they are beginning to see the implementation of the Transformative Agenda starting to take shape within the cluster framework and that the FSC has been referred to as the best performing cluster in several countries. Interestingly, support from the gFSC GST in Rome has also not been a stranger to well performing clusters. He informed meeting participants that the modified CAP process would get more and more important to clusters moving forward and that donors have requested a meeting with all Executive Directors in Geneva in December to evaluate the extent to which the Transformative Agenda principles are being applied globally and nationally.

In closing, Dominique underlined the degree of evolution of Food Security Clusters he has seen over the past two years, in particular the active emergency country representation and the ability of these clusters to surge / scale-up when needed, in keeping with preparedness principles. He thanked the global team and national cluster representatives for their commitment to the work of the cluster. He also extended a special thank you to George Aelion and Graham Farmer for their leadership contributions, in advance of their upcoming retirements in 2014. Dominique also called on all gFSC partners to watch for the upcoming job notice for the Global Coordinator position and to actively contribute to ensuring a strong complement of candidates are secured. He committed to Partners that the same level of quality services, established under Graham's leadership, would be continued in the future. Finally, he thanked all those responsible for making the meeting a success (e.g. meeting chair, facilitators, presenters and the Rome support team) and expressed his eagerness to see similar levels of learning and momentum at future Global gFSC Partner Meetings.

Annex 1: Agenda



Global Meeting of Food Security Cluster Partners

5-6 November, 2013

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting is to review the work of the gFSC throughout 2013 and to identify priority areas for 2014.

5 November 2013 09.00-17.00	
09.00-09.30	Opening remarks and welcome <i>Presenter:</i> Graham Farmer, Global Coordinator, gFSC
09:30-10:00	Technical Working Groups Report-Back from the Assessment Working Group <i>Presenters:</i> Rossella Bottone , Co-Chair Assessment Working Group
10:00-10:30	Coffee Break
10.30-11.10	Technical Working Groups (cont.) Report-Back from the Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group <i>Presenters:</i> Allister Clewlow , Chair of the Food Security & Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group Report-Back from the Inter-Cluster Food Security and Nutrition Working Group <i>Presenters:</i> Hilary Motsiri (IFRC) <i>Expected Outcomes:</i> Overview provided of the achievements to date Agreement of all partners on and priorities for the next 6 months of the Working Groups.
11.10-12.00	Review of gFSC achievements April 2013 – November 2013 Introduction to the global Survey on the gFSC <i>Presenter:</i> Graham Farmer, Global Food Security Cluster Coordinator Update from the Evaluation Team <i>Presenter:</i> Julia Steets, Team Leader, Global Public Policy Institute <i>Background Documents:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global Food Security Cluster 2013-2014 Strategic Plan - Global Food Security Cluster Work Plan - gFSC Global Survey - FSC Evaluation TORs, 25.09.2013

	<p>- Concept Note on the Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Coordination, April 2013</p> <p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i> Overview of gFSC achievements and challenges faced from April 2013 to November 2013.</p>
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-13:15	<p>Introduction to the Panel Discussions</p> <p><i>Presenter and Chair for the Day:</i> Douglas Brown, World Vision</p>
13.15-15.00	<p>Panel Discussion: Coordination Solutions <i>Learning from successful coordination models in Bangladesh and Gaziantep</i></p> <p><i>Panel Members:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adeel Khan, GOAL, Gaziantep • Ben Mascall, NCMU, Antakya • Rosanne Marchesich, Co-Chair, Bangladesh FSC • Jannat Noor, Oxfam, Bangladesh FSC <p><i>Background Documents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report from 8-13 April Gaziantep and Anatakya, Food Security Coordination Support Mission - gFSC Inter Agency Assessment Presentation on the Tropical Storm Mohasen in Bangladesh - FSC Contingency Plan on Cyclones in the South, July 2013 - Lessons Learned Report and Presentations from Bangladesh and Gaziantep <p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i> An improved understanding of ways to coordinate in different national contexts.</p> <p><i>Output:</i> Dissemination of Guidance on Coordination Good Practices</p>
15:00-15:30	Coffee Break
15.30-17.00	<p>Panel Discussion: Long-term Coordination Solutions <i>Lessons Learned from Afghanistan and Somalia, with a focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance & Coordination • Information Management • Coordination of Assessments • Capacity Development <p><i>Panel Members:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holly Radice, INGOs Co-Coordinator Somalia FSC from Save the Children • Francesco Baldo, Co-Coordinator Somalia FSC • Cyril Lekiefs and Mutinta Chimuka, Co-Coordinators Afghanistan FSAC <p><i>Background Documents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lessons Learned Report and Presentations from Afghanistan and Somalia <p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i> Increased engagement with partners for integrating coordination good practices into food security interventions.</p> <p><i>Outputs:</i> Dissemination of Guidance on Coordination Good Practices</p>
17:00 – 18:00	Reception, FAO Aventino Room

6 November 2013

09.00-15.00

<p>09:00-9:15</p>	<p>Summary from Day 1 – Graham Farmer, Global Coordinator, gFSC</p> <p>Introduction to the Panel Discussions</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Douglas Brown, World Vision</p>
<p>09:15-10:15</p>	<p><i>Update on the Transformative Agenda:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strategic Response Planning</i> • <i>The Accountability to Affected Populations Framework</i> <p>Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean McCluskey, OCHA • Rosie Oglesby, ActionAid, Humanitarian Accountability Coordinator <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Vincent Annoni, IMPACT Initiatives</p> <p><i>Background Documents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key Messages: The IASC Transformative Agenda - IASC, AAP Operational Framework - Cluster Coordination Reference Modules - Revised Humanitarian Programme Cycle and related Guidance <p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To gain a deeper understanding of how the humanitarian system is addressing the new strategic planning process and to identify ways in which the gFSC can support it. - To identify ways in which <i>accountability</i> can be mainstreamed into food security interventions. <p><i>Output:</i> Key recommendations for supporting strategic response plans.</p>
<p>10:15 -10:40</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>10:40-12:00</p>	<p>Panel Discussion: Coordination Challenges and Opportunities in the Syria Crisis</p> <p>Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davina Jeffery, Save the Children • Philippa Young, Oxfam • Penelope Anderson, Mercy Corps <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Megan McGlinchy, CRS</p> <p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An appreciation of good practices for the coordination of cash-transfer programming and food security responses. - A better understanding on how to advocate for reduced vulnerabilities and alternative livelihood options. <p><i>Outputs:</i> Synthesis Report on existing challenges and opportunities for better coordination efforts.</p>
<p>12:00-13:00</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>13:00-14:00</p>	<p>Emerging Priorities Plenary Discussion on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The gFSC strategic direction and work plan for the next 6 months

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways of addressing one or more of the following issues: <i>Preparedness, Resilience, Accountability, Cash & Vouchers and Environment.</i> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Gillian Anderson</p> <p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of priority activities to be achieved in 2013. - Identification of new and important food security-related themes to be included in the work plan and modalities for addressing them. <p><i>Outputs:</i> An amended Work-plan and list of focal points to undertake specific activities</p>
14:00-14:30	Coffee Break
14.30-15.00	<p>Conclusions and next Steps</p> <p>Tentative dates, venue of next gFSC meeting 7-9 April 2014</p>

Annex 2: Participants List

Global Meeting of Food Security Cluster Partners

5-6 November, 2013

List of participants

First Name	Surname	Organization
Amar	Nayak	ActionAid International
Rosie	Oglesby	ActionAid International
Deepack	Singh	Act Alliance
Megan	McGlinchy	Catholic Relief Services
Justus	Liku	CARE
Paul	Wagstaff	Concern Worldwide
Kate	Hart	DFID
Adeel	Khan	GOAL
Julia	Steets	GPPI
Markus	Skinner	Helpage
Vincent	Annoni	Impact Initiatives
Agnès	Dhur	International Committee of the Red Cross
Hilary	Motsiri	International Federation of the Red Cross
Ryan	Freeman	International Federation of the Red Cross
Micheal	Yemane	International Medical Corps
Penelope	Anderson	Mercy Corps
Quentin	Legallo	Norwegian Refugee Council
Thomas	Olholm	Norwegian Refugee Council
Jean	McCluskey	OCHA
Philippa	Young	Oxfam
Allister	Clelow	Samaritan's Purse
Ruco	Van Der Merwe	Samaritan's Purse
Davina	Jeffery	Save the Children
Julie	Mayans	Solidarites International
Josephine	Ippe	UNICEF GNC
Bettina	Iseli	Welthungerhilfe
Douglas	Brown	World Vision International
Michelle	Clark	WSPA
Lindsay	Jardine	WSPA

Country Food Security Cluster Participants

Mutinta	Chfimuka	Afghanistan FSC
Cyril	Lekiefs	Afghanistan FSC
Rosanne	Marchesich	Bangladesh FSC
Jannat	Noor	Bangladesh Oxfam
Marie Joelle	Jean Charles	Haiti WFP
Nanthilde	Kamara	Mali, FAO
Masae	Shimomura	Mynamar, WFP
Fakhre	Alam Khan	Pakistan, FAO
Ben	Mascall	Turkey, NCIMU, Antakya
Adeel	Khan	Turkey, GOAL
Francesco	Baldo	Somalia, FAO
Holly	Radice	Somalia, Save the Children
Bakri	Osman	Sudan, WFP

Cluster Lead Agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization

Lori	Bell	FAO
Martina	Buonincontri--Hernandez	FAO
Alexandra	Guyetsky	FAO
Mathias	Mollet	FAO
Dominique	Burgeon	FAO

World Food Programme

Barbara	Baille	WFP
Rosella	Bottone	WFP
Ross	Smith	WFP

Global Food Security Cluster Support Team

George	Aelion	gFSC
Marina	Angeloni	gFSC
Kaisa Tuulia	Antikainen	gFSC
Vanessa	Bonsignore	gFSC
Samantha	Chattaraj	gFSC
Roberta	Canulla	gFSC
Graham	Farmer	gFSC
Emma	Fitzpatrick	gFSC
Dina	Jerkovic	gFSC
Yvonne	Klynman	gFSC
Marjolaine	Martin-Greentree	gFSC
Marisa	Muraskiewicz	gFSC

Assessment Working Group Participants

13:30-17:00 Lebanon Room

Amar	Nayak	Action Aid International
Alexandra	Guyetsky	FAO
Matthias	Mollet	FAO
Kaisa	Antikainen	gFSC
Dina	Jerkovic	gFSC
Emma	Fitzpatrick	gFSC
Marjolaine	Martin-Greentree	gFSC
Vincent	Annoni	Impact Initiatives
Penelope	Anderson	Mercy Corps
Philippa	Young	Oxfam
Fakhre	Alam	Pakistan FSC
Ruco	Van Der Merwe	Samaritan's Purse
Davina	Jeffery	Save the Children
Julie	Mayans	Solidarites International
Rosella	Bottone	WFP

Urban Working Group Participants

9:00-12:00 Lebanon Room

Rosie	Oglesby	Action Aid International
Megan	McGlinchy	Catholic Relief Services
Kate	Hart	DFID
Makiko	Taguchi	FAO
Marina	Angeloni	gFSC
Yvonne	Klynman	gFSC
Samantha	Chattaraj	gFSC
George	Aelion	gFSC
Ryan	Freeman	IFRC
Michael	Yemane	International Medical Corps
Penelope	Anderson	Mercy Corps
Quentin	Legallo	Norwegian Refugee Council
Thomas	Olholm	Norwegian Refugee Council
Laura	Phelps	Norwegian Refugee Council
Philippa	Young	Oxfam
Allister	Clewlow	Samaritan's Purse
Ruco	Van Der Merwe	Samaritan's Purse
Davina	Jeffery	Save the Children
Julie	Mayans	Solidarites International
Rosella	Bottone	WFP
Jeff	Marzilli	WFP
Douglas	Brown	World Vision International
Lindsay	Jardine	WSPA

Inter-Cluster Food Security & Nutrition Working Group Participants

11:00-14:00 Mexico Room

Julien	Morel	ACF
Domitille	Kauffman	FAO
Charlotte	Dufour	FAO
George	Aelion	gFSC
Josephine	Ippe	GNC UNICEF
Hilary	Motsiri	IFRC
Michael	Yemane	IMC
Douglas	Brown	World Vision
Michelle	Clark	WSPA

Annex 3: gFSC Working Group Face to Face Meeting Reports

Assessment Working Group

Since it was created the Assessment Working Group (AWG) has executed activities that fulfilled its objective to provide technical direction to the gFSC on key areas of assessment needs in humanitarian food security responses. In recognizing that the AWG has achieved its main objectives there was consensus amongst its members to redirect its efforts and focus on alternative demand driven work. During the face to face meeting the AWG was consequently renamed the Quality Programming Working Group (QPWG) and its future core functions will include monitoring and response analysis and quality programming issues. New co-chairs for the group were elected: Vincent Annoni, Impact Initiatives; Philippa Young, Oxfam; Davina Jeffery, Save the Children.

Food Security Cluster (FSC) Indicators

Following finalization of the FSC Indicators the global FSC support team collected and collated user feedback on the FSC indicator list, and shared the feedback with the AWG. In October 2013 the AWG undertook a light revision of its output indicators that could be used to measure progress towards specific strategic objectives outlined in each country's Strategic Response Plan (SRP). The AWG reviewed and endorsed the revised output indicators.

The indicators will be shared on OCHA's humanitarian response repository. The co-chairs of the QPWG will review the output and situation indicators that are used in countries 2014 SRP in the first quarter of 2014. Following the review they will report back to the QPWG to discuss if and how to modify and update the core list of indicators.

FSC Indicator Handbook

The FSC Indicator handbook was developed as a quick reference source for cluster support teams. Information in the indicator handbook includes what the indicators are, where and when they could be used and includes links to references where the support team can access further guidance. In an effort to make the indicator handbook representative, the gFSC collected expertise from its partners for inclusion in the handbook.

Next steps for the handbook will include it being distributed to cluster support teams. Additional expertise, users' comments and references will be collected for inclusion in the handbook. A second and updated version of the handbook could follow if relevant.

Questionnaire Bank

The AWG aimed to create a Global Food Security Questionnaire Bank to expand on the Food Security Question Bank, developed by the Technical Working Group of the Bangladesh FSC. The question bank would serve as a resource for conducting food security assessments.

Due to the diverse number of questionnaires that are used in each agencies' assessment the AWG decided to not take this exercise forward.

Inventory of Assessment Tools

A draft inventory of various food security assessment tools was prepared by Save the Children and Oxfam. The goal of this inventory is to look at existing tools used by gFSC partners. Focal points from each of the gFSC's partner organizations were identified and requested to provide input into the inventory.

Collection of input for the inventory is ongoing and co-chairs agreed to finalize and formulate its structure.

QPWG Way Forward

The TORs for the group will be revised to reflect monitoring and response analysis. An impending meeting of the co-chairs will decide deliverables for the group that focus on quality programming issues, with attention to disability, gender and age. Deliverables that link to Action Aid's agenda on accountability to affected populations will especially be investigated. The QPWG will also look at the Preliminary Scenario Definition and other tools that it can increase its involvement with.

Monthly teleconferences of the QPWG will continue and will include ad-hoc presentations of member's work to increase information sharing and member engagement. A face to face meeting of the QPWG will be organized before the gFSC meeting of Partners in April 2014.

Plenary Discussion

The proposals and the achievements of the WG were welcomed by all gFSC partners.

Food Security & Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group

Having reviewed the work of the last six months and with the overall goal of refining its coordination role in urban food security response, the Working Group committed to bring forward some concrete initiatives, promote new partnerships and increase the outreach at the country-level.

Mapping Exercise & Case Studies

The Mapping Exercise, led by NRC and Samaritan's Purse, continues to achieve significant results. VERSION II of the map has been completed with more partners sending their data and some quality improvements have been included, such as the possibility to look at aggregated projects per country and zoom into hot spots where the higher number of urban activities are taking place. In addition, the map is now available on the gFSC Urban WG webpage and accessible to all. The mapping has also been introduced to other mapping exercises such as CaLP Cash Atlas and FAO Food for Cities network and potential linkages and collaboration are being discussed.

Next steps include setting up a feedback mechanisms through which partners can provide input on potential specificities and filters to be included, as well as data visualization. Additional improvements will also be taken into account, such as decentralization and inclusion of towns; ranking of programme's impact; development of indicators; specification of target group (beneficiaries, vulnerability criteria, etc.) and budget.

Collection of information on urban food security projects is one of the main objectives of the WG and with this view a Case Study Template has been developed to capture best practices in urban food security programming and be eventually linked with the mapping exercise. The collection of case studies will not only help support information sharing and best practices between partners at the global level, but can be shared with country level clusters to highlight previous approaches and the use of assessment tools. WG members understood the importance of this effort and committed to contribute by sending their urban case studies.

Next steps include developing a concept note to guide the case studies collection; drawing lessons learned from the case studies and involve other potential partners such as the academia, other urban networks and local organizations.

Urban Guidance, Indicators and Programmes

Several initiatives on developing urban food security tools and guidance have been initiated by different partners and the WG has been involved in many of them, such as the Concern Kenya Indicator Development for Surveillance of Urban Emergencies (IDSUE); the Review of Urban Food Security Targeting Methodology and Emergency Triggers (Oxfam, ACF, Concern); IFRC Urban DRR Programme and UN-Habitat Cities Resilience Profiling Programme.

Having confirmed the existing gaps in urban food security assessments guidance, WFP and the gFSC Urban WG drafted a proposal “Adapting Food Security Systems and Tools to an Urban World” that should look into defining the urban “scope” and adapting assessment tools to the urban context through desk reviews; monitoring systems; urban workshops and other related tools.

Next steps include getting feedback on the gFSC/WFP proposal, identifying a core group of experts who would strongly commit to it and setting a fundraising strategy.

Additionally, the development of a set of urban indicators for the Urban WG was proposed by some partners and brainstorming is ongoing with the gFSC Assessment WG for collaboration. The collection of case studies could also help in identifying the most used indicators in urban responses.

Country Level Reach Out

Following the last Face to Face meeting discussions on country-level outreach, the Somalia Cluster initiated the creation of Somalia Urban WG and held a first meeting to discuss the structure and aim of the group. A briefing paper on the Somalia efforts has been drafted with the goal of encouraging other country-level urban initiatives, especially in those places where the urban dimension became a crucial issue. Other country clusters such as Yemen and Afghanistan have expressed their interest in following the Somalia example and looking into the creation of urban hubs/WGs.

Next steps include consolidating these existing efforts and continue country-level encouragement through info sharing and best practices; possible involvement of country clusters representatives in the global Urban WG meeting and communications.

Other than increasing local coordination for urban food security responses, the country-level urban hubs/WGs could serve as monitoring systems and help in gathering data and examples of urban programming and indicators that could feed into urban guidance projects at the global level.

Partnerships and Events

FAO and the Food for Cities team have called for the participation and engagement of the Urban WG in an Urban Food Security event to be held at the World Urban Forum 7 (Colombia 2014). Many WG members responded expressing their interest in taking part of the initiatives and efforts are being made to include all members' events under the WG umbrella.

The Urban WG will also be involved in other major upcoming urban events and will liaise with FAO, ICLEI, UN-Habitat, and other agencies to enhance collaboration. Additionally, the work of the Urban WG was introduced and published on the ENN Field Exchange Journal latest edition dedicated to urban issues.

Webpage, Communications and Participation

The Webpage of the WG has been improved and new sections have been created for events/conferences; mapping & case studies; tools & guidelines; minutes & reports and the ongoing Philippines Response.

Attempts have been made to enrich and diversify the agenda of the WG teleconferences by inviting new members to present their urban activities, including also academic and other urban forums representatives. The participation to the teleconference has increased in the last 6 months with an average of 10/12 participants each time. Attempts have been made as well to make the teleconference more action-oriented and by listing the action points under each item in the minutes.

Plenary Discussion

The proposals and the achievements of the WG were welcomed by all gFSC partners.

Inter-Cluster Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

The ICWG was created with the intention of providing operational/coordination/technical direction and guidance to the gFSC on key areas of synergy between the Nutrition and Food Security Clusters in humanitarian responses. The face-to-face meeting of the Inter-Cluster Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (ICWG), held on 4 November 2013, reaffirmed the strategic priorities of the group and the process to be adopted during the next six months.

Key Issues

Since the last Global Partner Meeting in April 2013, the working group addressed two deliverables within its terms of reference. It developed and conducted a field survey for cluster coordinators in order to identify the present coordination field practices between the Food Security and Nutrition Clusters. Upon careful analysis of the survey results and the dissemination of key findings, the Working Group identified principal synergies and complementarities, gaps and limitations, as well as best practices regarding existing coordination mechanisms between Food Security and Nutrition Clusters at field level.

The objective of the survey was to evaluate the adequacy of coordination between the Nutrition and Food Security Clusters. The survey was sent to nutrition cluster coordinators and food security coordinators (27 responded in total). The survey looked at the priority operational areas where coordination is important and the challenges faced at the field level.

The feedback received by field-level Cluster Coordinators was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Of those 27 colleagues who responded to the survey, 88.9% rated coordination as very important; 84.2% rated coordination on information sharing as very important; 79.2% rated coordination on assessments as very important; and 75% rated response planning coordination as very important. The survey highlighted the need for guidance that is simple, practical, and concrete on how to work more effectively together. Additional guidance and support were requested at global level to improve country cluster coordination and performance in certain program areas (i.e. Assessments). Further items highlighted were the challenges relating to mandates and understanding of roles at field level, as well as the difficulties associated with certain personalities in dealing with coordination issues and information sharing.

In this light, a key deliverable that was identified during the last Global Partner Meeting was the development of a Letter or Guidance Note, jointly signed by both Global Coordinators that would outline fundamental synergies, complementarities, gaps and lessons learned that were discerned from the survey findings. This letter was disseminated to Food Security and Nutrition Cluster Coordinators in country. It is a first step to begin addressing the coordination gaps between both clusters and develop a stronger communication network between both global and national level FSC & GNC partners.

Plenary Discussion

During the plenary discussion, it was suggested that there be joint trainings for Food Security and Nutrition Cluster Coordinators as well as Joint Bi-Annual Meetings. Greater linkages were also encouraged between the two clusters (gFSC & GNC) and the SUN (Scale-up on Nutrition) and REACH initiatives. A further point of concern was the need to increase the working group membership cadre through more active involvement of global and national partners.

There was a sense that the nutrition component needed to be incorporated into existing food security tools and guidance, such as the FSC Standard Operating Procedures, in an effort to harmonize them. The gFSC 21 food security situation indicators already incorporate three nutrition cluster indicators. These assessment indicators could in turn assist the group in devising joint food security and nutrition strategic objectives that could be helpful for national partners when writing the Strategic Response Plan (SRP).

During the Working Group Face-to-Face Meeting, FAO colleagues also gave a presentation on an ECHO Funded FAO Capacity Building Project that is meant to improve the food and nutrition security of affected populations in emergencies. While the ICWG acknowledged that this project is an agency-led initiative, it welcomed the opportunity of disseminating some of the project findings and products through ICWG channels. These products include a map of existing tools that link food security and nutrition responses, good practice case studies and online training modules for FS&N Coordinators.

Actions

In terms of the Working Group Action Plan for the next six months, it was agreed that the Joint Letter would be shared with all in-country Food Security and Nutrition Coordinators and that any comments received would be fed-back to the group. It was also noted that there would be a joint teleconference with the GNC SAG to increase the working group membership cadre by the end of November. In this light, it was also recommended that the ICWG involve existing country clusters with a strong inter-cluster background, such as Colombia, Somalia and Afghanistan, in an effort to consolidate existing lessons learned and support national cluster needs, in as far as our capacity allows.

The ICWG will disseminate the inter-cluster products produced by the FAO colleagues as part of their ECHO-funded Capacity Building Project. The working group will also mainstream the nutrition component into existing FSC SOPs and tools & guidance. It will also devise joint food security and nutrition strategic objectives that could assist national partners with the revised CAP process.

Further action points include the creation of an online discussion group, either via email or via the gFSC website, where Food Security and Nutrition practitioners can ask questions, share information and solve problems. Joint Trainings for the cluster coordinators, as well as joint missions will be promoted. In addition, the working group will ensure that the joint trainings, support missions and assessments are also multi-cluster in nature and that there is sufficient national capacity to address coordination issues between the two clusters, especially when the international workforce retreats.



The Food Security Cluster (FSC) is a component of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) architecture for improved humanitarian response.

The FSC is co-led by FAO and WFP and represents a partnership of around 46 institutions from the UN, NGO and International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. For more details see www.foodsecuritycluster.net

Many thanks to the following for their contributions during our Strategic Plan period of 2013-2014:

