



## Safety and Protection Cluster, Fiji

### **Background**

Tropical Cyclone Winston, the most powerful cyclone to strike Fiji in recent time, cut a path of destruction across the country on 20 and 21 February 2016. The eye of the Category 5 cyclone packed wind bursts of up to 320 kilometres per hour. The cyclone tracked west across the country, causing widespread damage in all four divisions. It affected up to 350,000 people (170,000 female and 180,000 male) - equivalent to 40 per cent of Fiji's population. This includes 120,000 children and more than 3,100 people with disabilities. The hardest hit areas are the Lau group and Lomaiviti groups, which includes Koro Island, in the Eastern Division, Rakiraki and Tavua in Western Division and Taveuni and Cakaudrove in Northern Division. Fiji, like most Pacific countries, was already suffering from the impact of the strong El Niño event, which has caused drought and water shortages.

Protecting human rights and promoting equality is central to humanitarian action. The situation, needs and opportunities of girls, boys, women and men are different. Often, these differences are even more pronounced during humanitarian crises. The impact of TC Winston further exacerbated pre-cyclone inequalities and protection risks. Having in mind the different needs, vulnerabilities, capacities and resilience of girls, boys, women and men affected by the disaster, many organisations work towards the safety and protection of the affected population. Those activities are aimed at reducing vulnerability, supporting resilience and providing needed support. This calls for a mechanism which will ensure better coordination of the activities and contribute to increasing efficiency and effectiveness in providing support to the affected population.

### **Definition of protection**

Protection is defined as all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, namely human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.

### **Purpose and focus of the Cluster**

The Safety and Protection Cluster is a coordination forum through which the protection actors responding to the protection needs of the affected population can:

- 1- Share information;
- 2- Coordinate interventions, avoid duplication and ensure timely response;
- 3- Develop a harmonized approach and tools, and seek consensus on issues;
- 4- Create partnerships and linkages for better prioritization of available resources;
- 5- Commit to and endorse minimum standards for protection interventions;
- 6- Monitor progress and report on activities and needs;
- 7- Identify protection concerns and contribute to advocacy initiatives which address them;
- 8- Promote the centrality of protection in all humanitarian action.
- 9- Coordinate capacity building efforts.



### **Guiding principles and approach**

The work of Safety and Protection Cluster is guided by the Principles of Partnership<sup>1</sup> and Humanitarian Principles<sup>2</sup> with emphasis on:

- National responsibility and ownership.
- Do no Harm.
- Best Interest of the Child.
- Community Participation.
- Confidentiality.
- Non- Discrimination.
- Promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Respect for diversity and sensitivity for differences arising from gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and other diversities;
- Strengthening of the existing protection system.
- Strengthening resilience of the affected population.

### **About the lead and co-lead**

The Safety and Protection Cluster is led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MoWCPA). The Ministry's Permanent Secretary chairs the meetings.

The co-leads are UN Women and UNICEF, with the latter providing Secretariat services (sharing of the agenda, writing and distributing minutes and other relevant communication).

### **Membership**

The membership of the Safety and Protection Cluster shall include relevant government institutions, UN agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations, as well as community organisations responding to the protection needs of affected girls, boys, women, men, persons with disability, older persons, persons concerned by housing, land and property (HLP) issues, minority groups and the most at risk and vulnerable people.

### **Sub-Clusters**

There are three active sub-Clusters:

- Child Protection sub-Cluster, preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of girls and boys affected by the disaster. Lead: NCCC ; co-lead: UNICEF
- GBV sub-Cluster, preventing and responding to GBV related to the emergency setting. Lead: MoWCPA; co-lead: UN Women
- Older persons sub-Cluster, preventing and responding to the vulnerabilities of older persons in emergency setting. Lead: MoWCPA

### **Meeting schedule**

The Safety and Protection Cluster meets on a weekly basis, every Friday at 11am until a new meeting frequency will be decided.

Ad-hoc meetings and task forces are established upon consultation with the members of the Cluster, when this is considered necessary to address an urgent issue.

<sup>1</sup> <https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20English.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples\\_eng\\_June12.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf)



**Linkages with other coordination forums:**

The Safety and Protection Cluster will establish and maintain close links with other coordination bodies, specifically the working group on mental health and psychosocial support.

The Safety and Protection Cluster will also collaborate with other clusters to ensure the integration/mainstreaming of protection principles in the whole humanitarian response.

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