

## Global Shelter Cluster – Strategic Advisory Group Meeting Notes – 23 October 2025

### Participants

ACTED / IMPACT Initiatives (Ugo Semat), Australian Red Cross (Leeanne Marshall), CARE (Steph Haiselden), CRS (Jamie Richardson and Eva Suárez), DRC (Dipti Hingorani), IFRC (Ela Serdaroglu), IOM (Carolina Cordero-Scales), NRC (Maha El Ayyoubi), Philippines Shelter Cluster (Lionel Dosdos), GSC (Pablo Medina, Caroline Dewast, Neil Bauman, Alexandre Koclejda, Mamen Sancha)

Excused/Absent: Seki Hirano, UNHCR

### Agenda

0. Welcome / Introduction of new SAG members
1. Country Updates (Philippines and Afghanistan)
2. GCCG Membership Expansion Discussion
3. Cluster Leadership Arrangements & Transition Activities
4. AOB

#### 0. Welcome / Introduction of new SAG members

Dipti Hingorani (Global Lead for Shelter and WASH, DRC; [dipti.hingorani@drc.ngo](mailto:dipti.hingorani@drc.ngo)) was welcomed to the group and introduced as the new DRC focal point for the GSC SAG.

Lizzie Babister ([lbabister@habitat.org](mailto:lbabister@habitat.org)) was welcomed, joining this forum for the first time under her new capacity, representing Habitat for Humanity.

Maha El Ayyoubi introduced herself too and represented NRC in the absence of Amelia Rule.

#### 1. Country Updates

##### Philippines – Cebu Earthquake Response

From Philippines, Lio and Neil updated the situation after two significant earthquakes: one in Cebu (Central Visayas) and another in Davao (Southern Mindanao). The primary update focused on the Cebu earthquake.

On 30 September 2025, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Bogu City, in northern Cebu. The quake occurred at a depth of approximately 5 km, which contributed to the severity of damage. The event affected 18 municipalities, with an estimated 135,000+ houses impacted. Of these, approximately 7,400 houses were completely destroyed, and around 128,000 partially damaged.

A key compounding factor is the continued seismic activity: to date, there have been over 12,000 aftershocks, with magnitudes ranging from 1.4 to 5.8. This factor can influence the ongoing damage assessment with the risk of misclassification of building safety, as homes that appear structurally sound may later be compromised due to subsequent aftershocks. This recommendation draws on lessons learned from the 2013 Bohol earthquake, where early assessments led to inaccurate categorization and later safety concerns.

The government has initiated a “whole-of-government” response, including the establishment of “tent cities” and the exploration of modular/container-based transitional shelter solutions.

40 Shelter Cluster partners are actively responding, highlighting as key partners IOM, PRC, CARE, Save the Children, and ACCESS Consortium.

Priority activities: emergency shelter materials distribution, essential household items, technical guidance on safe repairs and support in displacement sites.

Further detailed structural assessments and recovery planning will proceed once seismic activity stabilizes.

## **Afghanistan**

Alexandre is on mission in Kabul supporting Afghanistan Shelter Cluster in the transition process. He updated from Kabul that the country continues to face overlapping humanitarian pressures, with nearly half of the population requiring assistance due to long-term conflict, climate-related shocks, recent earthquakes, and the continued arrival of returnees from Pakistan and Iran. Approximately 1.7 million people are living in informal settlements, where women and girls face heightened protection risks and restricted access to services and livelihoods. An estimated 5.75 million people are in need of shelter support, with 1 million targeted in the current response plan and around 400,000 reached to date.

A key challenge this year is the influx of 2.2 million returnees, compounded by recent border-related tensions and localized damage to housing. The 31 August earthquake resulted in over 8,000 homes severely damaged or destroyed. Partners have distributed nearly 7,000 emergency shelter kits, repair kits, NFIs, and winter clothing, though the earthquake response remains significantly underfunded (USD 8M received of USD 49M required).

Assessment teams have identified 53 sites hosting more than 100,000 individuals, with population movements expected to evolve in the coming weeks.

In parallel, the Shelter Cluster, CCCM Working Group, and HLP coordination streams are merging into a consolidated Shelter and Settlements Sector. This transition is occurring against the backdrop of the broader humanitarian reset, where coordination boundaries between humanitarian response and the Basic Human Needs (BHN) development architecture are still being defined.

There was a comment from Carolina about the absence of Housing within the BHN draft architecture presented. Alexandre replied it is still unclear. So far, the Durable Solutions Working Group supports this component but its team is not complete yet.

## **2. GCCG Membership Expansion Discussion**

Pablo presented the potential revision of the GCCG membership discussed during the last GCCG retreat, which recently took place in Geneva. The idea was to rethink the role of the GCCG in the context of the Humanitarian Reset, including cluster reform, operational coordination, and how the group can continue to serve as a space for information sharing, peer support, and exchange of good practices. While the GCCG is no longer part of the formal IASC architecture, members agreed that it remains a useful collaborative forum and can continue meeting without formal reporting requirements.

A proposal was introduced to expand or adjust the composition of the GCCG, in order to reflect evolving coordination models (including localization efforts and area-based approaches) and to address the current imbalance in representation, as the group is heavily UN-led. The proposal suggested including additional NGO representatives and actors involved in other coordination systems.

### Concerns raised by SAG members:

IOM and IFRC highlighted the importance of maintaining clarity of purpose. They noted that while broader coordination dialogue is needed, this should not dilute the GCCG's core function as a cluster-specific coordination platform.

They recommended cluster coordination discussions and broader cross-model coordination discussions to remain separate spaces, rather than merging into one forum.

Any potential expansion should be considered only after the outcomes of current cluster mergers and transitions are clearer, to avoid creating new structures prematurely or without a shared identity.

**Action point:** A written version of the proposal will be circulated to the SAG for further review and feedback prior to any decision.

## **3. Cluster Leadership Arrangements & Transition Activities**

Pablo provided an update of Cluster X the leadership conversations: NRC has withdrawn its leadership offer, with IFRC continuing as co-lead. NRC will retain its HLP technical leadership role. Discussion on UN co-lead arrangements between IOM and UNHCR is ongoing.

Transition activities. After 2 Q&A sessions held at the beginning of October, where country cluster coordination teams shared their updated and questions with the Global Coordinators, the GSC ST is collating these questions and others from additional exchanges and has prepared a draft FAQ document.

**Action point:** GSC ST will share the FAQ document with the SAG to gather potential additional questions from the partners.

#### **4. AOB**

##### **a. Update from the Inter-agency Evidence and Research Group**

Maha provided an update from the Inter-agency Evidence and Research Group—comprising CARE, CRS, Habitat for Humanity, and NRC, and currently coordinated under the Global Shelter Cluster—. It has been working since Shelter Week 2024 to examine how evidence is generated and used across the shelter sector. The group is focusing on identifying the systemic changes needed to make evidence processes more equitable, inclusive, and community-centered, rather than top-down. Several potential pathways have been identified, and discussions on the most effective way forward are ongoing. The group plans to present its progress and proposals to the SAG at the November meeting, to ensure wider engagement and explore next steps for taking this work forward sector-wide.

##### **b. Common Pipeline Evaluation preliminary findings**

Caroline shared some preliminary findings from the evaluation such as the need of formalizing governance mechanisms. In order to go into the proper level of detail, she requested dedicated discussion time in the next SAG meeting for an update. It was agreed the inclusion of this point without objections.