COMPLEX AND HIGH THREAT ENVIRONMENTS: CHECKLIST FOR THE CCCS

Below is a checklist of issues that present particular challenges in complex and high threat environments and which will likely face country offices when designing and implementing humanitarian interventions in these contexts.

Although these are challenging issues, they are not insurmountable obstacles to delivering the CCCs. Country offices should approach them with a risk management mindset (consult EMOPS risk management guidelines), asking themselves:

- What are the risks?
- How can they be mitigated?
- Does the mitigating measure for one risk area create or increase other risks?
- What is the residual risk after applying mitigating measures?
- Is the potential gain worth taking the residual risk?

Checklist of issues to consider

- **Adherence to humanitarian principles**: our humanitarian interventions must adhere to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality (defined in the CCCs). This can be difficult, especially maintaining neutrality in conflict settings. Consult EMOPS risk management guidance.

- **Civil-military coordination**: the military are often involved in provision of aid, whether amidst conflict or natural disaster or both, prompting dilemmas about how far to rely on the military for access or support while still upholding humanitarian principles. How we approach this can undermine or uphold UNICEF’s image and perception among affected populations as a neutral and impartial actor. Consult EMOPS guidance on civil-military coordination.

- **Sanctions**: We need to ensure that the programmatic choices we make do not violate any UN sanctions. The UN and member states maintain lists of entities/individuals who are subject to sanctions or been designated terrorists. While such sanctions do not directly apply to the work of UN organisations, they may impact our work. Consult Humanitarian Policy issues relevant to Operating in Complex and High Threat Environments.

- **Non-State Entities (NSEs)**: we may have to work with NSEs to negotiate access, protect staff or assets and protect rights of children and women. It is important to ensure that our engagement with any non-state armed group is clear, focused and principled. Consult programme guidance note on engaging with NSEs.

- **Advocacy**: in complex and high threat humanitarian situations, in particular those involving human rights violations, it can be challenging to make decisions on whether to speak out publicly on child rights issues. As a rule of thumb, UNICEF should speak out when there is sufficient evidence of gross violations of children’s rights, which can include systematic violations of children’s rights; a clear attack against children; or grave violations against children in armed conflict. Consult the “golden rules” on when and how to speak out (Communication and public positioning in humanitarian advocacy).