

1. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Advisory Group met on 16 and 17 June 2025 under the Chairpersonship of Ms. Nicole McHugh (Ireland). The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, with seven members attending in-person in Geneva and nine virtually. Alongside regular updates and discussions on the use and management of the Fund, the meeting focused on CERF's role within the Humanitarian Reset- both in terms of operational and strategic adjustments that could be made, and possible new approaches to advocacy and resource mobilization that could be considered due to reduced political and financial support for humanitarian action. The Group also engaged with the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG) and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mr. Tom Fletcher, allowing for an exchange on the Group's recommendations and perspectives from the meeting.
2. In the first session, Ms. Alice Armani Sequi, Chief of the Pooled Fund Management Branch (PFMB) and Mr. Michael Jensen, Chief of the CERF Secretariat, provided highlights on the **use and management of CERF**, the Fund's 2024 achievements and key activities undertaken since the last meeting in December 2024. It was noted that in 2024, CERF allocated \$575 million to enable assistance for 35 million people, and had maintained its speed and flexibility, allowing UN agencies to initiate CERF-funded activities, on average, only two working days after the submission of a Rapid Response application. It was also noted that during the first five months of 2025, CERF had allocated some \$180 million to humanitarian emergencies in 20 countries, including \$100 million to boost life-saving assistance in ten of the world's most underfunded and neglected crises. CERF's \$9.5 million allocation for climate-smart humanitarian action in eight countries – made possible by the CERF Climate Action Account - helped strengthen the adaptive capacity and resilience of vulnerable people impacted by climate-change. The role of CERF as the largest global financier of anticipatory action' was also highlighted, with the Fund supporting 16 countries with pre-arranged 'anticipatory' funding for frameworks, of which three had been activated so far in 2025, prompting the immediate release of over \$14 million to Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique. Notably, the anticipatory action framework in Afghanistan for drought is the first designed with complementary funding from CERF and a Country-Based Pooled Fund in support of UN and NGO partners respectively, including national partners.
3. **The Advisory Group voiced appreciation for the management of CERF**, as well as the Fund's continued crucial role in enabling the humanitarian system to respond rapidly, effectively and in a coordinated way, while **helping to advance the system change required for a successful Humanitarian Reset**. In addition to its role responding to sudden onset and underfunded emergencies, the Group commended CERF for its role as a **"weather maker"**, highlighting its growing influence in advancing quality programming, innovation, and best practices. **The Fund's leadership in anticipatory action and climate-smart humanitarian solutions was widely commended**, with emphasis on the continued complementary role of Country/Regional Funds in the roll-out of AA frameworks. The Group also noted the importance of considering AA frameworks for countries that are increasingly affected by climate-related disasters and frequently receive CERF Rapid Response grants to address these needs. The Advisory Group voiced appreciation for CERF's added value in the **climate-financing landscape**, noting the additional resources and partner diversity that the CERF Climate Action Account has generated, and the climate-smart lifesaving humanitarian interventions it has enabled for people caught in climate-related disasters. The Account's role in bridging climate and humanitarian funding - and alignment with the Rio Markers was noted as critical, and the Group called for a strengthening of fundraising in support of the Account. The Advisory Group also applauded CERF's commitment to **keeping local actors at the centre of the humanitarian system's decision-making processes**, as well as OCHA's efforts to ensure strategic complementarity between CERF and the CBPFs, while noting the increasing importance of ensuring coherence in financing across the "Triple Nexus", especially with overall funding under pressure.

4. In a session on **CERF in the Humanitarian Reset**, the Chief of PFMB presented key outcomes of an assessment of how CERF can be strategically aligned with the Reset, based on insights collected through consultations with a wide array of stakeholders at country and global level, including the CERF Advisory Group. The assessment was framed around (i) how CERF can help ensure the best possible crisis response with the available resources, (ii) how CERF can help empower humanitarian leaders and the people we serve, and (iii) how to renew and reimagine the work of CERF in light of new expectations and resources. **Across all stakeholder groups there was clear affirmation that CERF is a critical instrument for advancing the ambitions of the Reset.** The assessment identified critical areas for adjusting CERF to a new humanitarian landscape, and it was noted that these were in line with CERF priorities and built on the priorities and direction of travel that CERF had been on for several years. The assessment affirmed that CERF should continue to maximize the humanitarian system's impact by supporting collective and strategically prioritized action, under the leadership of the RC/HC. CERF was recognized as a tool that allows the UN system to deploy rapidly in support of local and national capacity, when required. There was acknowledgement that CERF can support RC/HCs to advance key country-level humanitarian priorities – and that while strategic prioritization should remain anchored in the HCT/UNCT, operational prioritization should be made closer to the point of delivery, including through sub-national and area-based coordination structures. There was interest in further simplifying and accelerating CERF processes – and ensuring a stronger complementarity with Country/Regional Funds, and other funding streams. The assessment also called for strengthening advocacy, communications and resource mobilization for the CERF.

5. The Advisory Group expressed appreciation for the comprehensive consultations and recommendations for the positioning of CERF in the Humanitarian Reset. The Group reiterated **CERF's crucial role in guiding positive change in the humanitarian system** and emphasized the role of the Fund in promoting greater coordination, complementarity and strategic coherence within the humanitarian system. It was noted that a coordinated ecosystem of pooled funds can serve as a helpful backbone of the Reset, with CERF and the Country/Regional Funds as the largest funds positioned as central pillars of humanitarian financing. **The Group voiced support, in principle, to the proposal of the USG/ERC to channel more humanitarian funding through CERF and the Country/Regional Funds**, with several members highlighting the need for bilateral donors to increasingly align their funding decisions with allocations from these Funds to further enhance coherence and impact. The Group suggested that OCHA clearly articulates CERF's role in advancing localization, and to be more prescriptive in promoting best practices in UN agencies' partnerships with local and national actors under CERF grants. It also noted its availability to further discuss CERF's support for UN agencies' common services, as well as the future strategic use of the CERF loan facility. Finally, the Group pointed **to the need to preserve CERF's global mandate as a fund for all**, while ensuring support for the humanitarian crises of the hyper-prioritized Global Humanitarian Overview.

6. In a session on **CERF resource mobilization, advocacy and communications**, Ms. Anja Nitzsche, Chief of OCHA's Partnership and Resource Mobilization Branch, updated on CERF income trends and donor engagement. She informed that **CERF's projected income for 2025 stood at \$406 million** - a sharp decline from recent years and a return to 2015 funding levels. It was noted that while the donor base had expanded, CERF's income remained highly reliant on a few large donors, with continued underrepresentation from Latin America and Asia Pacific. She also updated on efforts to deepen and diversify the donor base, including through more compelling and impact-focused communications targeting skeptical audiences. Ms. Lisa Doughten, OCHA's Financing and Partnership Division Director, provided a brief update on the organization of CERF's 20th anniversary campaign and encouraged members to actively engage in the upcoming activities of the campaign.

7. **The Group expressed support for OCHA's fundraising and advocacy efforts, offering several actionable recommendations.** Advisory Group member Mr. Ruy Pereira (Director of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency) highlighted the Brazil-hosted COP30 as an opportunity to further position CERF in the climate-financing landscape. Others proposed leveraging CERF's 20th anniversary during the UN General Assembly. The Group praised the high-quality reports (CERF Annual Report and CERF Climate Report). They however emphasized strong real-time communications on impact and results achieved, as well as the importance of clear messaging on CERF's unique value vis-a-vis other funding

mechanisms. The Group also underscored the need for tailored regional communications as per target countries and regions, as well as the importance of increased engagement with the private sector in priority countries and regions. Building on the positive experience from the Climate Action Account, the Group suggested that the ERC, with support from OCHA, explore opportunities to attract additional funding to CERF around other thematic areas—such as protection and gender.

8. In the final session, the Advisory Group **engaged with the USG/ERC** who briefed the Group on the latest developments in the Humanitarian Reset and reaffirmed that the Fund will be a cornerstone of the Humanitarian Reset, echoing the strong appreciation for CERF among UN leadership. The ERC emphasized CERF’s unique ability to deliver coordinated, and principled assistance quickly and flexibly, while grounding allocations in collective strategies and inclusive processes. The USG/ERC also highlighted the need to channel more funding through CERF and noted the important role of the Advisory Group in supporting CERF advocacy and peer-to-peer efforts, including in the context of CERF’s 20th anniversary and the upcoming COP30. The Chair of the Advisory Group applauded the USG/ERC for his leadership during the Humanitarian Reset and for his management of CERF, underscoring that **CERF has a key role to play in driving the required changes**. She also highlighted the Group’s support to champion CERF and increase political buy in and donor funding towards CERF, while stressing the importance of clearly articulating CERF’s added value and complementarity with Country/Regional Funds. To help ensure that CERF can deliver on the vision of the Reset, the Chair called for a transparent articulation of any potential changes to the Fund’s use and involvement of the Advisory Group in such discussions. She also emphasized that while CERF should remain a catalyst for system change, its **core life-saving and global mandate must be preserved**. She pointed to the importance of OCHA ensuring the necessary capacity of the CERF secretariat to implement potential changes and manage the operations of CERF. Members echoed the importance of communicating CERF’s results and impact, calling for stronger support from UN agencies in “telling the story of CERF”.

9. In the closing session, Ms. Lisa Doughten and Ms. Nicole McHugh thanked members for their invaluable support and contributions to the efforts of the Advisory Group and offered special thanks to eight members departing the Group in 2025. The next meeting of the Advisory Group is expected to be held in New York in November/December 2025.