

CENTRAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND ADVISORY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Background

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/124 of 15 December 2005 on Strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, decided to “upgrade the current Central Emergency Revolving Fund to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) by including a grant element based on voluntary contributions to be replenished at regular intervals, so as to ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian emergencies.” As articulated in the resolution, the objectives of the upgraded CERF are “promoting early action and response to reduce loss of life, enhancing response to time-critical requirements and strengthening core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises, based on demonstrable needs and on priorities identified in consultation with the affected State, as appropriate.”
2. As envisaged by the report of the Secretary-General on the Improvement of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund of 20 October 2005, a CERF Advisory Group will be established to provide guidance on the speed and appropriateness of fund allocations, and to examine performance and reports on its use, in order to ensure accountability and transparency.
3. The following terms of reference outline the principal functions, membership and procedures of the Advisory Group.

II. Key Functions

4. The CERF Advisory Group will provide periodic policy guidance and expert advice to the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and through the ERC, the Secretary-General, on the use and impact of the Fund. In particular, it will:
 - 4.1. Review the timeliness and appropriateness of Fund allocations.
 - 4.2. Review the management of the Fund, including reporting and the results achieved against Fund use.
 - 4.3. Review Fund performance against the objectives set by the General Assembly.
 - 4.4. Assess Fund levels and recommend Fund replenishment.
 - 4.5. Examine independent reviews and other evaluations conducted at the initiative of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, of the function and performance of the Fund.
 - 4.6. Review and advise on transparency and accountability issues including the effectiveness of the CERF website.

5. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) may also review and provide input to the Advisory Group on the use and impact of CERF.

Based on the above functions, the Advisory Group may make recommendations to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Secretary-General for the improvement of Fund implementation and use. The Secretary-General shall share these recommendations and conclusions with Member States through the President of the General Assembly to ensure transparency and accountability.

III. Meetings and Reporting

6. The CERF Advisory Group will meet twice per year at times that are appropriate for reviewing the annual use and implementation of the Fund, and for facilitating its regular replenishment. The Advisory Group may also be convened on an ad-hoc basis by the Chair or on the recommendation of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to consider specific issues.
7. The Emergency Relief Coordinator may make use of electronic communications, the CERF website and videoconferencing to facilitate information sharing among Advisory Group members between formal meetings.
8. The Advisory Group will issue, in a timely manner, a summary record of each of its meetings. Such reports shall be made available by the Emergency Relief Coordinator on the CERF website.
9. A summary of Advisory Group discussions and activities shall be included in the annual report on CERF submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. The Advisory Group Chair or, in his/her absence, one of the members of the Advisory Group, may also be invited to address the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the annual High-level Conference on CERF, and formal meetings of the IASC on the use and impact of the Fund.

IV. Composition and Selection

10. The Advisory Group is an independent body comprised of up to 18 experts, who will serve in their individual capacity to provide policy guidance and expert advice to the Emergency Relief Coordinator on the use and impact of the Fund. Its membership will broadly represent the humanitarian community and will take into consideration the mix and range of skills and expertise required for the management of such a Fund, including expertise from countries affected by crises. Specifically, the CERF Advisory Group will consist of:
 - 10.1. Fourteen individuals, drawn from the pool of Member States that have contributed to the Fund's grant facility, with appropriate consideration to the scale and magnitude of contributions and to geographic and gender balance.
 - 10.2. Four independent experts drawn from a range of partners and stakeholders including governments, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, practitioners, academic and research institutions and the private sector.

11. Governments and interested organizations are encouraged to nominate senior officials to the Advisory Group. The Secretary-General will select the members of the Advisory Group in accordance with the composition above and with appropriate consideration of the following:
 - 11.1. Demonstrated, senior level expertise and experience in responding to a range of humanitarian emergencies, including, for example, disasters from natural hazards, complex emergencies and drought, and/or financial management;
 - 11.2. Knowledge of the UN system and its humanitarian and development activities; and
 - 11.3. Geographical and gender balance.
12. Those UN agencies and those other international organizations eligible to receive CERF funds, as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), are excluded from membership to the Advisory Group, but may be invited to participate in Advisory Group meetings and discussions, as appropriate.

V. Term of Office

13. Advisory Group members will serve a single three-year term. Advisory Group members will be rotated with due consideration of the need to preserve the continuity of the Group. In principle, this means that one-third (six members) of the Advisory Group will rotate each year.
14. In the event that an Advisory Group member is unable to complete his or her term, a replacement will be selected through the process described in Section IV of this document.

VI. Chair and Vice-Chairs

15. The Advisory Group will include one chair and one vice-chair, who will be elected by the Advisory Group from among its members to serve for a one-year term, renewable for a second year. These positions will also be rotated with due consideration of the need to preserve continuity.

VII. Secretariat

16. The CERF secretariat will provide secretariat support to the Advisory Group. The CERF secretariat will also draw upon, as needed, additional support from OCHA as a whole as well as members of the IASC. The Emergency Relief Coordinator will exercise overall responsibility over the CERF secretariat.

VIII. Remuneration

17. CERF Advisory Group members will not receive remuneration for their service, but may receive travel grants and per diem expenses in order to attend Advisory Group meetings.