



A fund  
for all,  
by all



## Concept Note

Last updated: 3 November 2022

**The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) High-level Pledging Event (HLPE) for 2023 aims to mobilize financial resources to ensure the CERF is well positioned (as one of the most effective financing tools) to provide time-critical, life-saving humanitarian assistance.**

In particular, the HLPE will

- 1. Showcase CERF's achievements and unique role** in alleviating the suffering of those most vulnerable by enabling fast, coordinated and effective provision of life-saving assistance in sudden onset emergencies and sustaining relief operations in crises where funding is limited or not available. The Event will also demonstrate CERF's global reach and comparative advantages in providing quick, agile and strategic funding in a complementary and coherent manner with other funding sources, particularly Country-based Pooled Funds, as well as CERF's important role in driving positive change within the humanitarian system.
- 2. Provide an opportunity for donors to express global solidarity and announce pledges to CERF for 2023** to ensure that CERF can effectively help meet acute humanitarian needs, where and when needed the most. In the context of increasing dire humanitarian needs, a fully-resourced CERF at US\$1 billion, as endorsed by the General Assembly, is essential to ensure efficient, coordinated assistance reaches the people most in need. CERF is a dependable, predictable funding mechanism for the most urgent and critical humanitarian action. It is often the first funding source in new and rapidly escalating emergencies and one of the very few funding sources in underfunded emergencies. Strong and reliable donor support is therefore critical for CERF to remain fit for purpose and be able to adapt continuously to changes in humanitarian needs.

Agenda and Format:

- **Opening segment:** This will include opening remarks by UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres and remarks by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) for the UN Office for

### Date and venue

**Friday, 9 December 2022**

**10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** (New York, EST)

**Format:** In-person

**Venue:** ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

### Registration

Kindly complete one form per delegation. Delegations may register a maximum of three delegates to attend in-person.

To register, please go to:

[bit.ly/CERFHLPE2023](https://bit.ly/CERFHLPE2023). The deadline to register is **Friday, December 2, 2022** at 6 p.m. New York (EST).

### Contacts

For more information you may visit the webpage at:

<https://cerf.un.org/event/high-level-conference/high-level-pledging-event-central-emergency-response-fund-2023>.

For inquiries, kindly contact the OCHA focal points for the event:

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the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Mr. Martin Griffiths.

- **High-level panel:** a distinguished panel will focus on CERF's role in meeting the urgent life-saving needs of people in crises in 2022.
- **Statements and announcements:** Member States and partners to announce support and pledges to CERF for 2023 and potential top-ups for 2022. Interventions should be limited to two minutes maximum.
- **Closing segment:** Closing remarks will be made by Mr. Martin Griffiths, USG/ERC, OCHA.

## Participants

All Member States, Observer Missions, UN agencies and partners are invited to the Event.

## Event Details

The Event will take place in-person on **Friday, 9 December 2022, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (EST) in New York.**

Member States are invited to participate at the Ministerial level. The HLPE will be live-streamed on UN Web TV and is to be held in English, with interpretation services in the six official UN languages.

Each delegation may register a maximum of three delegates to attend the Event in-person.

## CERF Achievements in 2022

War and armed violence, climate disasters, and the impacts of COVID-19, against the backdrop of a global economic slowdown, continued to drive humanitarian needs during 2022. Recognizing the critical role of CERF in initiating and strengthening relief efforts in countries affected by humanitarian crises, donors contributed \$526 million by October 2022. Enabled by these contributions and remaining funding from 2021 based on generous donor top-ups in late 2021, as of October 2022, CERF had allocated close to \$700 million – already the second-highest annual amount in CERF's history. These allocations have enabled multiple UN agencies and their partners, including local aid organizations, to provide life-saving assistance to millions of people across 38 countries during 2022.

This year has seen countries ravaged by new and escalating crises – from the war in Ukraine and its spillover effects; climate change-related emergencies, such as drought and flooding; to economic crises – all of which have required immediate humanitarian support. The allocation of funds through CERF's Rapid Response window has once again demonstrated CERF's effectiveness in enabling time-critical responses to humanitarian emergencies across the globe. Thanks to the Fund's fast-track mechanisms, the most urgent 2022 grant requests were processed in two working days, often making CERF the first available funding source for sudden onset emergencies.

In Ukraine, the war that broke out on 24 February caused the fastest and largest displacement in Europe since World War II and led to a drastic deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country. At the beginning of the year, the humanitarian needs across the country increased dramatically and by March, the number of people in need had risen from 2.9 million to 12 million. On the same day as the war started in Ukraine, CERF allocated \$20 million. This allowed humanitarians on the ground to jump-start the immediate scale-up of the humanitarian response from two eastern regions representing just 9 per cent of its territory – Donetska and Luhanska oblasts – to cover all 24 regions of the country. In mid-March, as the crisis escalated further, CERF allocated another \$40 million to support an expansion of emergency operations. These funds enabled UN agencies and their humanitarian partners to provide life-saving assistance to 950,000 people, including 114,000 people with disabilities, at the onset of the crisis.

Beyond the devastation it has caused inside the country, the war in Ukraine has also had far-reaching negative impacts on global food security. During the year, disruptions in grain shipments due to the hostilities in Ukraine, combined with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, armed clashes and consecutive failed rainy seasons in several food-insecure countries in Africa and the Middle East, resulted in 50 million people in 45 countries being driven closer to the brink of famine, with 345 million facing acute food insecurity. In response, CERF released a series of allocations through its Rapid Response window to fight hunger, totalling more than \$220 million as of October 2022.

Among the largest allocations, in mid-April, CERF allocated \$100 million to relief projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen, enabling UN agencies and their partners to

provide critical food, cash and nutritional help, medical services, shelter and clean water. Just a month later, another \$30 million was released from CERF to help meet the most urgent food and nutrition needs of millions of people in several countries of Africa's Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger), where food insecurity is feared to reach its highest levels since 2014. Another allocation of \$15 million to scale up emergency food assistance to people in the Central African Republic, suffering from increased malnutrition as a result of insecurity, poor harvests and rising food prices, followed in July.

CERF's ability to enable fast humanitarian responses to sudden onset emergencies was also evidenced in Cuba when Hurricane Ian hit its western part and left a trail of destruction as it crossed through the country. A request from the country team for \$7.8 million to provide immediate humanitarian assistance was approved in a matter of days and is currently helping facilitate a targeted response to the needs of over 575,000 of the most vulnerable people that, thanks to the timely CERF allocation, are receiving emergency shelter, food, water, health and education services.

CERF continues to support mitigation of the humanitarian impact of predictable climate-related humanitarian shocks and disease outbreaks, allowing for assistance to reach people before the peak of a crisis or reduce its impact. The Anticipatory Action approach is a practical way to allocate funding that could make a greater difference in countries where specific emergencies can be foreseen. To date, CERF has piloted Anticipatory Action frameworks in nine countries, and five have been activated. Additional frameworks for two more countries are currently being developed. The allocation from CERF in Nepal is the latest example of anticipatory humanitarian action in 2022. Due to the high probability of severe flooding, CERF allocated \$3.2 million in October 2022 to help partners prepare respond to the projected humanitarian needs of 80,000 people across 23 flood-prone municipalities in the country's west. Another two anticipatory allocations were released earlier this year to mitigate the direct impacts of the poor rainfall season in Niger (\$9.5 million) and prepare for severe flooding expected during the rainy season in South Sudan (\$15 million).

In 2022, CERF reinforced its commitment to boost underfunded humanitarian operations by allocating a record-high level of funding through its Underfunded Emergencies window – \$250 million – to 23 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East, where funding gaps are critical and unmet humanitarian needs alarmingly high. Through the first Underfunded Emergencies Allocation Round announced in January, CERF provided \$150 million to 13 underfunded and overlooked crises in Africa, Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean – the largest-ever single allocation – targeting an estimated 5.6 million people in acute need of humanitarian assistance. Through the second Round of Underfunded Emergencies Allocations launched in September, the USG/ERC released another \$100 million to help address humanitarian gaps in 11 countries in Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East, targeting over 4.3 million people.

CERF continues to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable through its targeted allocations to ensure that people in dire need of assistance, regardless of gender, age or disability, receives the support they so desperately require. In small and big crises alike, CERF puts every effort into reinforcing gender-based violence interventions, providing targeted support to people with disabilities, and ensuring their inclusion in humanitarian action. For instance, in response to exacerbated vulnerabilities of women and girls in Myanmar, CERF allocated \$1 million to provide gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health assistance to over 19,000 women. CERF also continues to spearhead enhancement of the Accountability to Affected Populations component through its allocations, requiring UN agencies' project proposals to articulate how they take account of, give account to, and are held to account by the people they seek to assist at all stages of the humanitarian response.

## Background

Established in 2006, the CERF has allocated over \$8 billion to provide life-saving assistance for millions of people in over 100 countries and territories. Since CERF was established, global funding needs through humanitarian appeals have increased tenfold – from \$5.2 billion in 2006 to assist 32 million people to some \$49.6 billion in 2022 to support over 206.2 million people in need. In 2016, the General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General's call to more than double CERF's annual funding target to \$1 billion, reflecting the increasing humanitarian needs and Member States' confidence in CERF. Since its inception, CERF has received contributions from 141 Member States, including 57 that have also benefited from CERF funding – a testament to the world's collective commitment to CERF as a "fund for all, by all".