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COP28 Side Event:
Role of CERF in the climate crisis and launch of the CERF Climate Action Account

Dubai, 3 December 2023

As delivered

Welcome, everyone, to the Humanitarian Pavilion for this dialogue on the role of the Central Emergency Response Fund, or CERF, in the climate crisis.

Since its establishment by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, CERF has become one of the most important humanitarian community tools when it comes to fast, effective responses to rapid onset crises and addressing the most urgent requirements in underfunded emergencies.

I want to express on behalf of OCHA, on behalf of the humanitarian community, deepest thanks to donors who have invested in this Fund, to donors who have entrusted with the United Nations to manage this Fund. We recognize that these are taxpayers' funds and we take that custodian responsibility very, very seriously.

With donations from more than 130 countries – many of you are here today – the Fund has provided more than US\$8.5 billion to enable UN agencies and partners to deliver timely, coordinated, life-saving assistance in more than 110 countries and territories. It's great to see some of the beneficiaries here, including local and national NGOs, as well as others. has truly lived up to its role as the fund "for all, by all" envisaged by the General Assembly.

CERF has also led the way in innovative finance solutions to climate-related emergencies. This includes expanding the use of anticipatory action to help communities to prepare and get ahead of predictable climate-related emergencies before they strike.

While there is no humanitarian solution to the climate crisis, humanitarians can continue to play a key role in addressing its consequences by minimizing and addressing loss and damage and supporting communities to build resilience. Additional finance dedicated to addressing climate-related disasters is urgently, urgently needed.

That is why today, OCHA is announcing the creation of the CERF Climate Action Account.

The CERF Climate Action Account offers a quick, efficient and impactful vehicle to get urgently needed climate finance to assist where it is most needed.

It will enable you, as donors, to contribute additional climate funding – that is funding outside the usual humanitarian funding streams available to CERF – directly to the account, in the knowledge that CERF will allocate the funds to anticipatory action, and to the humanitarian responses to climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, storms and extreme heat, wherever and whenever they strike.

In launching a new mechanism to help scale-up the climate action of the CERF, OCHA is fully conscious that humanitarian tools are only one small part of the solution, a complementary part of what must be a much broader and more ambitious effort to support governments and, more importantly, affected communities to respond to the ravages of climate change.

I want to thank all the CERF's donors for their support to its critical work over the years. And as we launch the Climate Action Account today, I want to thank everyone in advance for their generous pledges.

If I may, I would like to recognize the front contributors who have pledged and who have committed already: Latvia, we are very much honored to have a minister here and a delegation; Ireland, who joined us; Luxembourg; and I know there are many others who are inspired by these three and who will join the contributions.

Your contributions to CERF, will allow the UN and its partners to continue to provide swift relief in response to, or in anticipation of, humanitarian disasters wherever they strike, whatever their source, as we move into a world in which climate change holds the sword of Damocles over an increasing number of people.

Thank you.