

CERF allocates \$1 million to the Rift Valley fever response in Burundi

(Bujumbura, 20 July 2022) United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths released a US\$1 million contribution from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to assist around 340,000 people in the affected areas by the Rift Valley fever (RVF) in the Republic of Burundi.

The RVF primarily affects livestock, cattle in particular, and small ruminants. Livestock is one of the key sectors of the national economy accounting for 14% of GDP. Loss of animal livestock for farmers has considerable impacts on family livelihoods, representing losses of both assets and sources of revenue, potentially pushing entire families into deeper poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. To date, there are no report of humans contracting the disease in Burundi, though human infection remains a possibility, through mosquito bites or for people in direct contact with infected animals.

CERF funds are allocated to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). WHO's project focuses on controlling the spread of the disease with measures such as training medical professionals, and ensuring availability of analysis equipment to detect infections, as well as disinfection of areas at the epicenter of the spread. For its project, FAO will focus on infected animals, their treatments and ensuring food security through activities such as veterinarian training, animal spraying, establishment of national regulated channels for animal sourced food, and an active epidemiologic surveillance. These early response projects from the WHO and FAO will ensure limited spreading of the disease and adequate medical and veterinarian training, including for future outbreaks therefore reducing their impacts.

WHO mentioned that “this allocation of funds will save lives by controlling the transmission of the disease. It will be used to carry out activities to control the spread of the disease in order to prevent animals from being contaminated and thus stop the chain of propagation.” FAO added that “funds allocated will allow immediate actions aimed at reducing the spread while mobilizing other resources to control the epizootic disease through vaccination.”

UN Resident Coordinator Damien Mama said he was “very grateful to CERF for their timely response in allocating the funds to combat RVF, it makes it possible for the WHO and FAO to amplify assistance in the affected provinces.” Currently 50% of the most vulnerable people in the country and targeted through the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Burundi live in the provinces where RVF is prevalent. As of 19 July, the HRP funding received 5.1% of the required \$182 million. This critically low level of funding is hindering humanitarian assistance.

CERF pools contributions from donors around the world into a single fund allowing humanitarians to deliver life-saving assistance whenever and wherever crises hit. Throughout the years, CERF allocated more than \$70 million for 102 projects in Burundi.

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