

Background

Established in 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated over US\$6 billion to support life-saving assistance to 104 countries. CERF was created as a fund “for all, by all” and has over the past 13 years been the world’s global emergency fund that with unprecedented speed, predictability and flexibility supports life-saving aid and protection for millions of people, sometimes within hours of the onset of an emergency. Each year on average CERF enables partners to deliver critical healthcare to more than 13 million people, food aid to more than 6 million, urgent water and sanitation to some 10 million, and protection to more than 4 million. A majority of people assisted are women and girls.

Since CERF was established, global humanitarian needs have quadrupled – from US\$5.2 billion to assist 32 million people in 2006 to \$26.7 billion to support over 109 million people in need in 2019. In 2016, the General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General’s call to more than double CERF’s annual funding target to \$1 billion. This endorsement reflects Member States’ confidence in CERF, which has received contributions from 127 Member States, including from 52 that have also benefited from CERF funding – a testament to the world’s collective commitment to CERF as a “fund for all by all”.

“A strong United Nations needs a strong and reliable CERF to reach people trapped in crises and to respond to the needs of those furthest behind.” - United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres

CERF Achievements in 2019

Again in 2018 and 2019, humanitarian needs reached alarming levels. Donors recognized the need for a strong CERF response: in 2018, they contributed an all-time high of \$554 million to CERF and at the High-Level Pledging Event in December 2018 donors announced record pledges of \$439 million for 2019.

Throughout 2019, CERF’s global reach has been central to the humanitarian community’s ability to respond. The fund is on track to surpass the 2018 record of \$500 million allocated in a single year and has so far in 2019 provided life-saving assistance to millions of people in 44 countries. Funding from CERF has during 2019 targeted people affected by conflict and internal strife, disease outbreaks such as Ebola and cholera, and climate related emergencies as drought, floods and cyclones.

Through the rapid response window, CERF makes funding available when it is most needed at the beginning of a crisis or when ongoing crises deteriorate. In 2019 CERF has often been the first funding source in new emergencies. Data shows that a combination of CERF’s speed and agencies’ internal front-loading mechanisms on average allows a start time of CERF Rapid Response projects within 4 days from recipient agencies’ submission of proposals to CERF. CERF’s speed was demonstrated in March where within 48 hours after Cyclone Idai struck Southern Africa, CERF made \$20 million available to help humanitarian partners in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi ensure a scale-up of food, shelter, water and emergency health service provisions. Shortly thereafter, Tropical Cyclone Kenneth made landfall in Comoros and Mozambique and CERF instantly allocated another \$13 million to ensure provision of water and sanitation, shelter, food and health assistance. CERF also showed its speed when Hurricane Dorian from September 1st to the 3rd hit Bahamas. Already on September 5th, the ERC announced an allocation of \$1 million to complement the Government-led response with life-saving protection assistance.

¹ All data as of 1 November 2019.

Later in the year, CERF allocated \$45 million in Rapid Response funds to stave off famine risk in the Horn of Africa. The timely allocation ensured an immediate scale-up of food, nutrition assistance and safe water provision to millions of people across Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya who were facing acute needs after another season of failed rains.

To save more lives and further reduce suffering CERF is exploring ways to be even more timely by supporting anticipatory life-saving humanitarian action when data and evidence predict that a high-impact shock is imminent. In Somalia, OCHA is piloting anticipatory action in collaboration with partners, using CERF funding to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of severe drought shocks.

In 2019, CERF also continued to be a lifeline for people caught in crises that don't attract sufficient donor attention and funding but where needs are just as urgent. CERF provided a record high \$200 million to 21 underfunded and neglected crises providing life-saving assistance to an estimated 13 million people.

Reaching everyone and transforming the lives of those most at risk remains a key priority for CERF. In 2019 Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Mark Lowcock requested that Humanitarian Coordinators/Resident Coordinators give special consideration to four generally underfunded priority areas that target the most vulnerable. The four areas are: (a) support for women and girls, including tackling gender-based violence, reproductive health and empowerment; (b) programmes targeting persons with disabilities; (c) education in protracted crises; and (d) other aspects of protection. The CERF secretariat has encouraged specific attention to these priority areas and thereby supported enhanced efforts.

Event Objectives

The 2019 CERF High-Level Pledging Event will seek to galvanize increased commitment to CERF to ensure that the fund is fit to respond to increased humanitarian needs. It will offer an opportunity to the humanitarian community to respond to Secretary-General António Guterres' call during the 2018 General Assembly for increased funding to CERF. In particular, the event will:

1. **Showcase CERF's results** delivering life-saving aid, including its role promoting fast and effective response to people in need, wherever and whenever crises hit. The session will focus on CERF's support for women and girls, disabled people, education in protracted crises and other aspects of protection.
2. **Offer donors an opportunity to announce pledges to CERF for 2020** and collectively ensure that CERF's level of funding continues to increase and its donor base further diversifies.

Format

The event will be organized in two segments that will take place back to back:

1. **Ceremonial Segment:** The Secretary-General will open the event and initiate a ceremonial segment that through interventions by panelists comprising high-level representatives from Member States, Humanitarian Coordinators and UN Agency Heads will demonstrate the success of CERF in meeting the urgent life-saving needs of people in crises. The ERC will chair this session.
2. **Pledging Segment:** A separate pledging segment will offer Member States and other stakeholders an opportunity to announce pledges for 2020. The ERC will chair this session.

Participants

All Member States and Observer Missions, UN agencies, and the private sector are invited to the event.

Venue and Logistics

The event will be held on 9 December 2019, from 10 am to 1 pm. It will take place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber in the United Nations Secretariat in New York. Translation will be provided in all six UN languages.

Registration and Pledge

Participants are requested to complete the on-line registration form and indicate their intention to make a short statement and/or pledge by **2 December 2019**, by visiting <https://cerf.typeform.com/to/k4Zlbc>.