

2023

CERF ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Credits

This document was produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA wishes to acknowledge the contributions of its committed staff at headquarters and in the field in preparing this document.

Full project details, financial updates and real-time allocation data are available on the [CERF Data Hub](#) and [CERF website](#).

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Front Cover

The DRC. A woman waters the cabbages in her small garden in Bulengo displacement site. Photo: OCHA/Francis Mweze

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Letter from the Emergency Relief Coordinator

We thought 2022 was an unforgiving year for people caught up in crises. 2023 turned out to be even worse.

From the Occupied Palestinian Territory to Sudan, and from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and South Sudan to Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, worsening and protracted conflicts brought immeasurable suffering to millions of people worldwide.

2022 was the fifth-warmest year on record, but 2023 was the hottest year ever. The climate crisis continued to act as a threat multiplier, making extreme weather events more frequent and more intense, and driving humanitarian needs even higher. We saw its impact in Libya, where the floods in Derna left thousands dead or missing, and in the Sahel, where rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns have resulted in more frequent and severe droughts, to mention just a few.

Yet, sadly, 2023 was also a year in which severe funding shortfalls exacerbated the challenges of getting assistance to the world's most vulnerable people.

In the middle of all this, the extraordinary benefits of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) once again shone through.

In 2023, CERF proved to be a critical source for the rapid, prioritized and flexible funding required to provide life-saving assistance to nearly 33 million people worldwide.

In response to the outbreak of hostilities in Sudan, for example, CERF released \$106 million, ensuring essential care, protection and basic services for the millions of people affected, both in Sudan and in neighbouring countries. Together with allocations of nearly \$80 million from the Country-Based Pooled Funds in Sudan and South Sudan, this sustained the humanitarian response at a uniquely challenging time.

Despite the relentless demands on CERF to respond to this and other new emergencies, the Fund was again instrumental in addressing critical funding shortfalls in forgotten crises. In 2023, it channeled a record-breaking \$276 million to severely underfunded humanitarian responses in 26 countries, ensuring the continued provision of life-saving assistance to almost 14 million people.

Across the board, CERF continued to be an agent of change, driving more effective, cost-efficient and inclusive approaches to humanitarian action.

CERF has a key role in promoting efforts to act ahead of predictable hazards, having facilitated anticipatory action in more than 19 countries since 2019, including Fiji, Niger, and Dry Corridor countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). In addition, it provided earlier allocations before crises reached their peak, including proactive disbursements of \$104 million to eight countries dangerously close to experiencing famine, and \$18 million to countries most at risk from El Niño, such as Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

In support of a more inclusive and accountable humanitarian system, the Fund piloted the use of dedicated funding envelopes designed to increase and enhance the role of affected communities in decision-making and aid delivery.

Finally, 2023 was a turning point for CERF's role in tackling the climate crisis. CERF allocated one-third of its funding to assist the millions of people affected by climate-related disasters. And December saw a pivotal moment, with the launch of the CERF Climate Action Account at COP28 in Dubai to enable donors to support the response to a rapidly increasing number of climate-related shocks, without compromising support for other emergencies.

I am immensely proud of CERF's achievements in 2023. This report is testament to the Fund's unique and essential place in the global humanitarian response. None of its achievements would be possible without the generous support of donors, to whom I am deeply grateful.

But so much more would be possible if CERF were fully funded. In 2023, CERF received some \$559 million, a major step backwards in collective efforts to reach the \$1 billion funding target set by Member States in 2016.

If CERF is to continue saving lives, and if it is truly to become the "for all, by all" Fund, that is there wherever and whenever disaster strikes, it must reach this funding target. Therefore, as we embark on 2024, I once again urge Member States and the broader international community to help us achieve that goal.

Martin Griffiths

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator



Myanmar. Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths visiting Shwe Zedi monastery in Sittwe, Rakhine
Photo: OCHA/Nyan Zay Htet

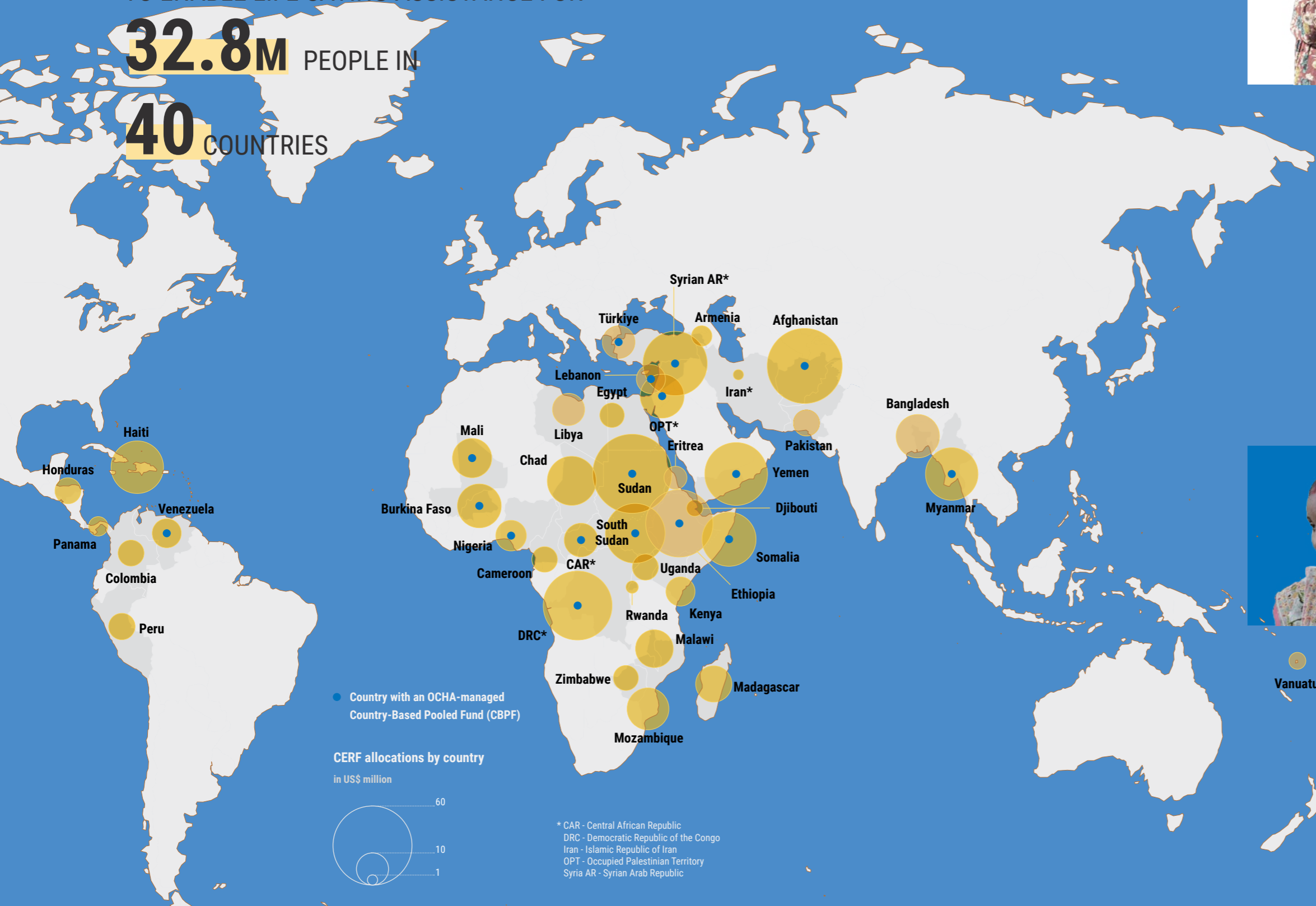
IN 2023, CERF ALLOCATED

\$667.9M

TO ENABLE LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE FOR

32.8M PEOPLE IN

40 COUNTRIES



* CAR - Central African Republic
DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo
Iran - Islamic Republic of Iran
OPT - Occupied Palestinian Territory
Syria AR - Syrian Arab Republic



Executive summary



\$667.9M
Allocated



32.8M
People
assisted



40
Countries
reached

A year marked by escalating global needs amid declining funding

The unparalleled humanitarian challenges faced in 2023 reaffirmed the need for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a pivotal instrument within the global humanitarian architecture for enabling rapid and effective responses.

Conflict remained a major driver of humanitarian needs, as new violent outbreaks led to alarming levels of civilian deaths and more displaced people than at any other time since the beginning of the century. Moreover, with 2023 estimated to be the hottest year on record, the global climate emergency continued to exacerbate needs, triggering catastrophic climate shocks – from an adverse El Niño episode across several countries and regions to the devastation brought by Storm Daniel in Libya.

These crises – alongside protracted instability, economic disruptions and disease outbreaks – meant that an estimated 363 million people needed humanitarian assistance by the year’s end – a 33 per cent increase from 2022.

UN-led humanitarian appeals requested \$56.7 billion to provide urgent, life-saving assistance to 245 million people in 69 countries. Unfortunately, as overall funding received for global coordinated humanitarian appeals saw a 25 per cent decrease compared to 2022, 2023 became a year marked by the widest funding gap in history. As a consequence, pressure further grew on the international community to ensure that humanitarian action becomes increasingly efficient, effective and accountable.

CERF at the forefront of the global humanitarian response

Against this backdrop, CERF allocated the third-highest amount of annual funding in its history – some \$668 million – to enable UN agencies and partners to provide fast and timely life-saving assistance to nearly 33 million people across 40 countries.

CERF’s Rapid Response (RR) window continued to be a critical source of funding for jump-starting operations in response to, and in anticipation of, emerging and rapidly deteriorating crises, providing UN agencies and partners with \$392.2 million for immediate life-saving assistance across 31 countries. Thanks to CERF’s speed and flexibility, CERF-funded RR activities started, on average, only 1.5 working days after the submission of funding applications – the fastest processing of CERF allocations to date (see page 30). This included immediate allocations in response to the catastrophic earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye, totalling \$50 million (see page 29).



1.5

Working days
Average RR project start time

In 2023, CERF reinforced its commitment to bolstering underfunded humanitarian operations by allocating a record \$275.7 million through its Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) window to 26 countries. These allocations enabled UN agencies and partners to sustain and scale up life-saving assistance for nearly 14 million people in countries with alarmingly high levels of unmet humanitarian needs and critical funding gaps. Myanmar, for example, benefited from a \$9 million UFE allocation at a time when an unprecedented 65 per cent of its Humanitarian Response Plan was unfunded, enabling an integrated response to the needs of people who have been displaced multiple times in difficult-to-access locations (see page 32).

In response to the urgent needs arising from conflicts, CERF allocated nearly 58 per cent of its annual funding – \$384.2 million – to assist approximately 16.3 million conflict-affected people in 22 countries. This significant amount of funding went towards CERF-supported responses to new conflict outbreaks, such as in Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), and to protracted hostilities and violence, including in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti and Yemen (see page 35).

An additional \$255 million, constituting 38 per cent of all CERF funding in 2023, was disbursed in response to natural disasters, providing life-saving assistance to nearly 14 million people across 22 countries. Approximately 80 per cent of this amount – \$201.8 million – was allocated to climate-related emergencies, for which, in 2023 alone, an estimated 73 million people required immediate humanitarian assistance. Funding from CERF enabled UN agencies and partners to assist around 10 million people across 19 countries affected by climate-related disasters, underscoring CERF’s leading role in responding to the humanitarian consequences of the climate crisis. In Libya, for example, when flash floods devastated large parts of the country, CERF allocated \$10 million to address the immediate and critical humanitarian needs of over 259,000 affected people; the allocation also helped to strengthen mechanisms for coping with future shocks of a similar kind (see page 62).

At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai in December 2023, CERF reaffirmed its critical role in climate financing by launching the CERF Climate Action Account. This will allow CERF to scale up climate-related humanitarian action in fragile contexts, through anticipatory action, early action and response (see page 40).

As well as responding to the consequences of conflict and natural disasters, CERF also provided \$6 million to assist some 1.5 million people across Africa impacted by health emergencies, including cholera outbreaks, and \$22.7 million to meet the humanitarian needs of over 1 million people grappling with the severe humanitarian consequences of economic disruptions (see page 41).

CERF’s ability to provide life-saving assistance to people in need across the globe was made possible by the generous support of its donors, including 63 Member States and observers, achieving a total annual income of \$558.6 million. This is a testament to donors’ continued confidence in CERF and a measure of the Fund’s robust fiscal foundation, underpinned by multi-year funding agreements (see page 19).

CERF RESPONDED TO MAJOR DRIVERS OF HUMANITARIAN NEED BY ASSISTING:



16.3M
People affected by conflict-related emergencies



13.9M
People affected by natural disasters, of which 10M affected by climate-related shocks



1.5M
People affected by disease outbreaks



1.1M
People affected by economic disruptions

Reaching those most at risk in emergencies

Throughout the year, CERF continued its focus on providing life-saving support to the most vulnerable during humanitarian emergencies. Women and girls comprised 56 per cent of all those assisted, accounting for 18.4 million people, while children under the age of 18 made up nearly half of all beneficiaries. Additionally, an estimated 2.7 million people living with disabilities benefited from CERF-funded assistance (see page 53).

Centrality of protection was an integral part of CERF-funded responses, with the protection sector receiving over \$90 million from CERF to assist approximately 6.5 million people – 25 per cent more than in 2022. Notably, 83 per cent of all CERF-funded projects incorporated gender-based violence (GBV) protection, either as a main objective or as a project component, continuing the positive trend from previous years (see page 46).

Three quarters (24.8 million) of those assisted by CERF were affected by forced displacement – the highest number in the Fund's history. Of these, 7.4 million were internally displaced people (IDPs), 4.5 million were refugees, 1.7 million were returnees and 11.2 million were people from host communities (see page 55).



In 2023, CERF has again shown that it is a quick, flexible, and strategic funding tool. Be it floods in Bangladesh, Libya or Somalia, earthquakes in Afghanistan, cholera anticipation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the conflict in Sudan or prevention of famine in eight countries in Africa – CERF was one of the first to react and thus a lifeline for many people, including women and girls, people with disabilities and older people. We appreciate that CERF's focus on anticipatory action has helped increase the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. Germany stands ready to continue its support for the CERF.

*Deike Potzel
Director-General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation,
Peace Building and Humanitarian Assistance,
Germany*

Catalysing innovation and positive change across the humanitarian system

Beyond funding humanitarian programmes delivering life-saving assistance for millions of people, CERF allocations were strategically leveraged to promote positive system change and strengthen the humanitarian response.

To enable the humanitarian community to get ahead of predictable crises, CERF continued to support the roll-out of anticipatory action frameworks in 2023. While only one framework was activated during the year – for cholera in the DRC – the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) endorsed five new or improved frameworks, with several others under development, increasing the amount of pre-committed CERF financing for anticipatory action from \$66 million in 2022 to over \$98 million in 2023 (see page 60). In addition, CERF made increased use of early action allocations to enhance the timeliness and impact of humanitarian assistance. Based on early warning systems, seasonal forecasting and other forward-looking analyses, CERF provided \$124 million in allocations at opportune moments along the crisis timeline. This includes a proactive \$104 million allocation to help prevent famine in eight at-risk countries (see page 43) and \$18 million to enable early responses to El Niño in three countries (see page 62).

In line with the Grand Bargain commitments, CERF UFE funding was used to promote localized humanitarian responses by encouraging Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) to engage local partners in prioritizing funding and to set ambitious targets for the amount of CERF funding to be sub-granted to national and local organizations. As a result, about a quarter of funding from the 2023 UFE rounds was sub-granted to national and local partners, building on the previous year's positive trend (see page 43).

In 2023, CERF reiterated its commitment to leave no one behind through inclusive programming. For instance, as part of the second round of UFE allocations, a dedicated funding envelope of some \$5 million was provided to strengthen collective Accountability to Affected People initiatives across 10 countries. CERF funding supported activities and systems to identify and promote the inclusion of minorities and marginalized groups, as well as initiatives that improve people's access to information and that systematically gather and evaluate beneficiary perceptions, including through collective feedback mechanisms (see page 64).

Strategic governance, continuous learning and transparency



\$1bn
CERF funding target

Throughout the year, the CERF Advisory Group provided valuable strategic advice to the Secretary-General and the ERC on the use and impact of the Fund.

The Group emphasized CERF's crucial role in rapidly responding to humanitarian needs, advocated for increased use of anticipatory action, supported CERF's expanded role in climate financing, engaged in peer-to-peer advocacy, and explored ways to mobilize additional resources to help CERF achieve its \$1 billion target (see page 75).

In 2023, CERF remained committed to continuous learning to ensure that its approaches and processes remain fit-for-purpose and well-adapted to the changing requirements of the humanitarian system.

OCHA ensured that dedicated learning activities were integrated into all activations of anticipatory action frameworks supported by CERF. The year also saw the completion of an independent review – under CERF's Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) – of the 2021 disability funding envelope, and an external evaluation of a 2020 CERF \$25 million multi-country grant to UNFPA and UN Women to address GBV, jointly commissioned by the two agencies (page 76).

Lastly, ensuring transparency and the availability of real-time data on CERF-supported operations remained a top priority in 2023,

including through the refinement of CERF's online management tools and data platforms, and rigorous adherence to standard operating procedures for monitoring fraud investigations. This was confirmed by CERF's 2023 transparency score, as measured by the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards, which remained stable at 95 per cent, placing CERF among the top 10 of approximately 1,550 organizations publishing their data (page 78).

Madagascar. A student attends class in a destroyed school in Eastern Madagascar. CERF funding allowed UNICEF to build a roof for the school after three cyclones destroyed the building in 2022 and 2023.

Photo: UNICEF/Prinsloo





About CERF

Burundi. FAO and partners distribute seed coupons in the commune of Busone. CERF funding helped provide food security and agricultural livelihood support to drought-affected people. Photo: FAO/Joseph Nsabiyaibandi

Introduction to CERF

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 as the United Nations global emergency response fund, CERF enables humanitarian actors to deliver life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people, when and where needed the most. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) manages CERF on behalf of the UN Secretary-General and is supported by OCHA.

CERF funding allows UN agencies and partners to collectively jump-start relief efforts in emerging or escalating crises before other funding sources are available. By building on the UN and humanitarian coordination architecture, CERF provides funding based on needs, risks and collective priorities. CERF also serves as a strategic instrument for addressing critical humanitarian gaps in underfunded emergencies.

The CERF secretariat ensures that funding is allocated properly, disbursed quickly and that the use of resources is reported appropriately and transparently. CERF allocations are designed to operate in complementarity with other funding sources, such as the Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) and bilateral funding (see page 67).



In 2023, the CERF was pivotal in responding to acute humanitarian needs in emerging and protracted crises, and evolving humanitarian approaches to reflect the realities of persistent conflict and climate shocks. USAID is proud to support this life-saving fund, which provided rapid multi-sector assistance to hardest-hit communities, including the conflict-affected populations in Sudan, as well as support to address new and sustained needs of vulnerable Syrians following the devastating earthquakes.

Sonali Korde, Assistant to the Administrator, Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), USAID



Bangladesh. CERF's funding supported communities in Bangladesh with emergency agricultural lifesaving agricultural inputs such as rice, seeds and fertilizer.

Photo: FAO/Saikat Mojumder

CERF IS



PROMOTING COORDINATION AND COHERENCE

CERF funding is allocated to multiple organizations based on each organization's comparative advantage and in line with humanitarian partners' commonly agreed priorities. This promotes coordination among humanitarian actors, eliminates duplication and overlaps, prevents fragmented responses and supports the achievement of collective outcomes.



FOSTERING PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

CERF interventions support the involvement of implementing partners, particularly local organizations. Each year, approximately a quarter of CERF funds is implemented through a large network of local and international responders who have partnered with UN agencies.



CATALYTIC

CERF enables humanitarian partners to quickly scale up response and leverage additional donor support through demonstrated and timely humanitarian action. CERF also allows Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators (RCs/HCs) to implement their vision for a better humanitarian response, supporting cross-cutting and other humanitarian priorities in a way that can catalyze positive change in the quality and accountability of humanitarian responses.



GLOBAL

CERF provides humanitarian support across the globe, expanding the reach of its donors to all crises, whether new, worsening or forgotten.



PREDICTABLE

CERF is a trusted and dependable source of predictable funding for the most urgent and critical humanitarian action.



FAST

CERF allocates funding within hours of a crisis, making resources available when they are needed the most. Time lost means lives lost.



COST EFFECTIVE

CERF offers value for money by allowing donors to efficiently assist people in need wherever crises strike. When donors contribute to CERF, they ensure that limited resources go as far as they can to save lives and reduce the suffering of millions of women, men, girls and boys caught up in crises.



NEUTRAL, IMPARTIAL AND INDEPENDENT

CERF is fully unearmarked, principled and independent to ensure funding goes to meet the most urgent, life-saving needs wherever crises hit.



ANTICIPATORY WHERE POSSIBLE

Where possible, CERF enables the delivery of life-saving assistance to vulnerable people ahead of predictable emergencies, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system.



SUPPORTIVE OF THE GRAND BARGAIN

CERF plays a key role in delivering the Grand Bargain: CERF funding is flexible, efficient, unearmarked, principled, transparent, supports cash programming, empowers humanitarian leadership, and promotes a coordinated, inclusive and strategic humanitarian response.



NEEDS BASED

CERF allocations are strictly life-saving and based on the needs identified and prioritized by humanitarian partners on the front lines of the emergency responses. This ensures early responses to the most time-critical humanitarian priorities.



Please see the Methodology Note for the first UFE round of 2024 here: [CERF UFE 2024-1 Methodology Note](#).



For more a more comprehensive description of CERF, please see: [This is CERF](#).

Funding windows

CERF channels funds to UN entities through its Rapid Response (RR) and Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) windows. While the process of developing a formal application is similar for both funding windows, the starting point for allocations differs.

For the RR window, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) – in consultation with humanitarian partners – can request funds at any time to respond to new and unforeseen humanitarian emergencies when timely response is critical. CERF-funded assistance reaches people rapidly and, in some cases, before the peak of a humanitarian shock. To ensure evidence-based allocation decisions, CERF uses a real-time dashboard and a statistical model to facilitate the comparison of new crises with past allocations. CERF is continuously improving its methodology.

UFE allocations start with a comparative global analysis of risk, vulnerability and funding levels for ongoing humanitarian emergencies through a consultative process at headquarters level involving UN agencies, OCHA and NGOs. CERF has developed a rigorous methodology to establish a strong evidence base for the selection of the most underfunded and neglected humanitarian crises to receive funding. The methodology includes three components:

1. A quantitative analysis of funding levels and the severity of humanitarian needs and risks aggregated into the CERF Index for Risk and Vulnerability.
2. Consultations with UN agencies, NGO consortia and other partners.
3. A desk review of Humanitarian Needs Overviews, Humanitarian Response Plans and other documents.

CERF also continues to be more forward-leaning by making anticipatory or early allocations in an emergency on a ‘no-regrets’ basis, even when information is still incomplete and uncertain. CERF funding for anticipatory action (AA) complements the Fund’s core funding functions under the RR and UFE windows. CERF funds AA frameworks that use early warning systems (forecasts and modelling) to predict disasters, with set thresholds that trigger the rapid release of pre-arranged financing. In this way, AA maximizes the window of opportunity between the initial prediction and the arrival of a forecasted shock to trigger interventions that prevent or mitigate imminent humanitarian impacts (see page 31).



The DRC. CERF’s Anticipatory Action funding supported Cholera prevention in North-Kivu, scaling up community-based epidemiological surveillance, including at this treatment centre. Photo: WHO/Guerchom Ndebo.

Loan facility

In addition to the two funding windows, CERF has a \$30 million loan facility to cover cash-flow gaps in UN humanitarian operations. This facility can be used when UN agencies experience cash-flow problems in responding to humanitarian emergencies due to delays in receiving contributions from donors. The ERC determines the amount to be advanced in each situation.

CERF ALLOCATION PROCESS

RAPID RESPONSE WINDOW*

UNDERFUNDED EMERGENCIES WINDOW*

Typically **2/3** of CERF's annual funding is set aside for RR allocations.



Typically **1/3** of CERF's annual funding is channeled through the UFE window.

Initiation

In a humanitarian crisis, humanitarian organizations on the ground jointly assess and prioritize humanitarian needs. CERF is also proactively monitoring emerging crises globally. RC/HCs can apply for CERF funding when needs in a country exceed the capacity of UN organizations to respond. CERF is guided by the humanitarian principles, and resources are allocated in line with CERF's Life-Saving Criteria. These criteria serve as guidance for the RC/HC and UNCT/HCT on how to develop applications for CERF funding.



RC/HC, country teams and CERF identify triggers for new and emerging crises.



CERF conducts funding and risk, vulnerability and severity analysis.



RC/HC in consultation with country team identifies strategic priorities and requests CERF funding.



CERF leads stakeholder consultation and document review.

Funding decision

Information on the mechanics and parameters of funding decisions can be found in the [CERF Handbook](#).



ERC takes funding decision.



ERC selects countries and determines funding envelopes.

Processing allocation

The approval of an allocation does not guarantee subsequent approval of projects. CERF reserves the right to request revisions or reject project proposals. Guidance and templates for project revision requests (no-cost extensions, reprogramming and redeployment of funds) are available on the [CERF Guidance page](#).



RC/HC in consultation with country team refines/identifies strategic priorities and submits strategy and project proposals to CERF.



CERF reviews strategy and project proposals, ensures adherence to [Life-Saving Criteria](#) and disburses funding.

Implementation

UN agencies are eligible for CERF funding. They implement grants in partnership with local, national and international NGOs, host governments and Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies.



UN agencies and partners implement CERF funding typically within **6 months**.



UN agencies and partners implement CERF funding typically within **9-12 months**.

* For standard allocations

CERF's strategic added value

CERF is designed to ensure that every dollar it allocates leverages additional benefits in support of the humanitarian response on the ground. For each CERF allocation, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) articulate, through a 'strategic statement', the added value and co-benefits that will be achieved using CERF funding – in addition to the operational, life-saving objectives that are central to all CERF allocations.

Setting out a clear, succinct strategic vision at the outset of an allocation process helps ensure that partners work towards a common strategic objective. This provides CERF and the ERC with assurance that CERF funds are utilized to their fullest potential.

When reporting on the use of CERF funding at the end of the grant period, RC/HCs are asked to reflect on the achievement of the strategic objectives set out in the initial strategic statement, and to assess how the allocation contributed to achieving the four overarching core objectives that underpin CERF's design and mandate: speed, timeliness, coherence and catalytic effect.

The 2023 grant reports reveal an exceptional level of positivity in the responses from RC/HCs regarding CERF's strategic added value, unparalleled in the Fund's history. This serves as a powerful testament to CERF's unwavering commitment to enhancing the humanitarian response by prioritizing the speed, timeliness and coherence of assistance. Additionally, it highlights CERF's ability to catalyse additional resources from various funding sources, further reaffirming its pivotal role in strengthening the quality of humanitarian efforts.

IN THE REPORTS ON THE USE OF 2022 CERF GRANTS*, RC/HCs STATED THAT:



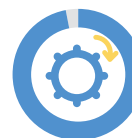
100%
of Rapid Response CERF allocations led to **fast delivery of assistance**



100%
of CERF allocations responded to **time-critical needs**



100%
of CERF allocations **improved coordination**



97%
of CERF allocations **improved resource mobilization from other sources**

*Due to the nature of the CERF reporting cycle, the RC/HC assessments only become available a full year after the calendar year under review. Assessments of 2023 allocations will only be available in early 2025

Contributions to CERF

UN Headquarters, New York. At the CERF pledging event in December 2023, donors pledge to ensure the CERF is well-placed to provide time-critical, life-saving humanitarian assistance to respond to growing humanitarian needs.

Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

Contributions to CERF

In a year overshadowed by financial instability, unfavourable exchange rates and decreasing funding globally, CERF received \$558.6 million from a broad array of donors, including 63 Member States. Despite continued strong and increasingly broad support, the level of contributions to CERF remained far below the \$1 billion annual funding target determined by the General Assembly in 2016. As global humanitarian needs soar, greater donor support for CERF is critical to ensure the Fund's ability to deliver life-saving assistance across the globe.

Broadening and deepening CERF's donor base

In 2023, the global humanitarian system faced significant challenges in mobilizing adequate financial resources to address the surge in humanitarian needs across the world. Global financial instability and economic downturns, including fiscal pressures on government budgets and spending, constrained collective efforts by donors and humanitarian partners to sustain the extraordinary level of global humanitarian giving recorded in 2022. As a result, overall funding received for global coordinated humanitarian appeals decreased by 25 per cent compared to 2022.

Thanks to the generosity and solidarity of donors, the Fund reached a total annual income of \$558.6 million. Despite the notable global decrease in funding towards the humanitarian sector, funding for CERF declined by only 9 per cent compared to 2022 (\$611.9 million), a significantly smaller reduction compared to that of global coordinated humanitarian appeals. This is a testament to donors' continued confidence in CERF. It is also, in part, due to CERF's robust fiscal foundation, underpinned by multi-year funding agreements, along with the addition of new donors and increased funding from some recurring donors.

CERF successfully broadened its donor base in 2023, continuing the positive trend from past years. In total, 63 Member States and observers – up from 59 in 2022 – contributed to CERF, as well as three regional authorities and numerous private sector actors. The largest donors to CERF during the year were Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, Canada, the United States, Belgium and Italy. The top 10 donors collectively supplied 83 per cent of CERF's 2023 income, indicating a more diversified donor base compared to 2022 (85 per cent) and 2021 (90 per cent).



Belgium is a strong supporter of CERF. In 2023, CERF's speed and flexibility allowed a rapid response to the earthquake in Syria and Türkiye, and provided life-saving assistance to the risk of famine in Africa and the Middle-East. Belgium strongly values CERF's forward-looking approach, in strengthening the quality of humanitarian aid in a world of growing needs.

*Caroline Gennez, Minister of Development Cooperation,
and Urban Policy, Belgium*


































































The CERF Data Hub provides detailed information on contributions to CERF in real-time. [CERF Data Hub \(unocha.org\)](https://unocha.org)







\$559M
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
IN 2023

63
MEMBER
STATES

MEMBER STATES

 GERMANY 106.5M	 NETHERLANDS 71.8M	 SWEDEN 66.7M	 UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND 64.0M	 NORWAY 48.1M	 DENMARK 31.4M	 CANADA 22.2M	 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 19.5M	 BELGIUM 18.2M
 ITALY 16.6M	 IRELAND 15.4M	 SWITZERLAND 11.2M	 FRANCE 10.9M	 FINLAND 8.7M	 AUSTRALIA 7.7M	 REPUBLIC OF KOREA 7M	 LUXEMBOURG 6M	 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES 5M
 SPAIN 3.2M	 ICELAND 2.3M	 AUSTRIA 2.2M	 NEW ZEALAND 1.8M	 RUSSIAN FEDERATION 1.5M	 KUWAIT 1M	 QATAR 1M	 SAUDI ARABIA* 1M	 TÜRKIYE 450k
 CHINA 425k	 PORTUGAL 376k	 LIECHTENSTEIN 332k	 SOUTH AFRICA 279k	 INDONESIA 220k	 CZECHIA 204k	 PHILIPPINES 200k	 MONACO 165k	 AZERBAIJAN 123k
 POLAND 120k	 ROMANIA 108k	 LATVIA 108k	 GREECE 105k	 CROATIA 100k	 CYPRUS 100k	 MOROCCO 100k	 VIET NAM 100k	 JAPAN 97k
 ESTONIA 97k	 SLOVENIA 85k	 COLOMBIA 75k	 MONGOLIA 60k	 SINGAPORE 50k	 TURKMENISTAN 50k	 SLOVAKIA 33k	 CAMBODIA 30k	 BANGLADESH 25k
 ALGERIA 20k	 THAILAND 20k	 BULGARIA 16k	 ANDORRA* 11k	 ZAMBIA 10k	 MONTENEGRO 5k	 PERU 5k	 ARMENIA 5k	 GUYANA 2k

OTHER DONORS

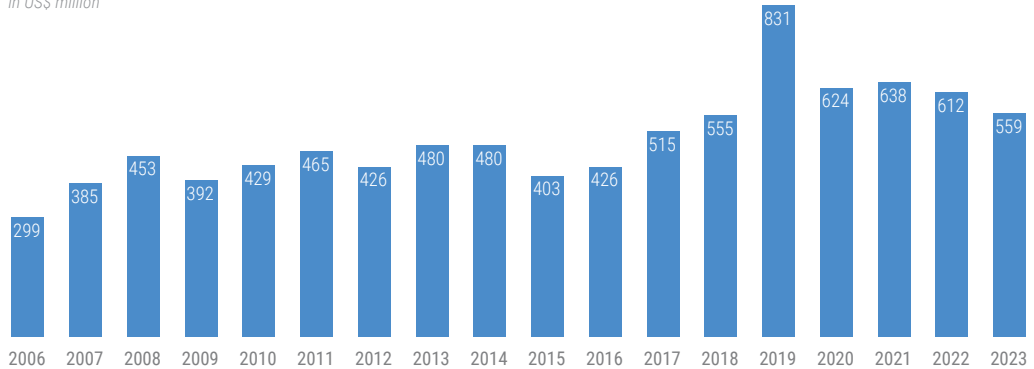
 GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS (BELGIUM) 661k	 CATALAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (SPAIN) 647k	 BASQUE AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (SPAIN) 265k	 MOHAMED FATHI AHMED IBRAHIM 1M	 STRIPE INC. 679k	 CIRCA ART LTD 75k	 KAAGNY/K-RADIO 33k	 BAHA'I INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY 20k	 OTHER PRIVATE DONATIONS THROUGH THE UN FOUNDATION 171k
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OTHER PRIVATE
DONATIONS OUTSIDE
THE UN FOUNDATION
2k

* Pledges yet to be paid at the preparation of the report.

PAID DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CERF (2006-2023)

in US\$ million



During the year, CERF also saw the return of former donors as well as the addition of new ones. The Fund welcomed the return of nine Member States that had previously contributed to the Fund: Algeria, Armenia, Colombia, Latvia, Greece, Slovakia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. In addition, Zambia contributed to CERF for the first time, bringing the total number of Member States that have contributed to CERF during the Fund’s history to a remarkable 133. Zambia’s contribution also increases the total number of recipient countries that have given back to CERF since its inception to 58 – a striking testament to the solidarity of these Member States with people affected by humanitarian crises around the world.

Moreover, 17 Member States increased their contributions in their original currencies from 2022: Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, France, the Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the Philippines, Portugal and the United States, as well as the regional authorities of the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation and the Basque Agency for Development Cooperation. In addition, some 27 donors, including one private sector entity, contributed \$1 million or more in 2023, compared with 25 donors in 2022 and 22 donors in 2021 – a further indication of CERF’s strengthened donor base.



Through its quick response to complex emergencies, CERF saves lives. Colombia supports the Fund, as now, more than ever, the world needs CERF to respond to the needs of vulnerable communities afflicted by conflict and natural emergencies.

Catalina Ceballos, Acting Deputy Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs, Colombia

These achievements were aided by targeted and collective efforts by OCHA to broaden and deepen the donor base. In 2023, OCHA successfully elevated partnership engagements with governments in the Gulf and continued engaging with key Member State groups and multilateral forums, including working with CERF Advisory Group members and donors on peer-to-peer advocacy efforts. Collective efforts at European Union (EU)-related forums also helped mobilize contributions from 24 of the 27 EU Member States during the year, three more than in 2022.

Notably, Dr. Mo Ibrahim, founding Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, joined as a new donor to CERF, with a \$1 million contribution. CERF also sustained its partnership with the Cultural Institute of Radical Contemporary Arts (CIRCA), a digital art platform based in the United Kingdom, which had helped amplify CERF messaging during 2022.

Collective efforts to secure timely and predictable contributions were also successful in 2023. Approximately \$313.1 million was received during the first quarter of the year. This represents 56 per cent of the overall annual income and a considerable increase from 2022 (\$243.4 million). In line with 2022 trends, 71 per cent of the overall income (\$396.7 million) was received via multi-year funding agreements with 16 donors, which greatly contributed to protecting CERF’s total income level in 2023.



I strongly urge you to have the ambition to make the CERF a larger Fund, because that will dramatically improve our capacity to respond to the multiplication of emergency situations that we witness and to the protracted problems that are more and more difficult to address. Be absolutely sure that what you will invest in CERF is probably the most profitable investment you can make for the good of humankind.

*António Guterres,
United Nations Secretary-General*

In a year marked by new and worsening humanitarian crises, OCHA continued to enhance public advocacy, donor visibility and digital engagement to demonstrate CERF's achievements and impact.

Publicly available materials released in 2023 included [new films](#) that showcased CERF's impact on the lives of people caught in prolonged emergencies, as well as [new animations](#), innovative holograms giving a voice to the lived experience of affected people, a [social media campaign](#) unveiling the new CERF Climate Action Account, and other audio and visual content illustrating CERF's catalytic role. CERF's social media community on [X/Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) continued to engage new followers in 2023 and helped promote fundraising content to influencers and audiences worldwide. Members of CERF's Advisory Group played a key role in sharing content with peers and national networks. CERF also provided self-access resources with [impact stories](#) and a dedicated [Trello Board](#) to help donors and partners communicate with their domestic audiences.



UN Headquarters, New York. Donors pledged at the CERF pledging event in December 2023. Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

A call to action to better fund CERF

While many donors in 2023 once again demonstrated strong support to CERF, the level of contributions remained far below the \$1 billion annual funding target agreed by the General Assembly in 2016. Achieving a minimum funding target of \$1 billion – equivalent to less than 2 per cent of global humanitarian requirements – is paramount for enabling CERF to expand its impact, reaching even more people requiring humanitarian assistance, and to assume a more influential role in fostering innovation and positive change in the wider humanitarian system.


Amidst increasingly unpredictable, intensified and proliferating humanitarian crises globally, combined with a general decrease in global humanitarian financing, CERF's unique mandate and proven added value has never been more relevant.

In 2024, OCHA will continue efforts to diversify and deepen the donor base, including by engaging governments and private donors in peer-to-peer advocacy. By contributing to CERF, Member States, observers and other authorities, as well as individuals, corporations and foundations, are joining hands with the international community's collective humanitarian action to reduce the suffering of millions of people caught up in crises across the world.



In focus: Overview of contributions to the CERF Climate Action Account

The CERF Climate Action Account was successfully launched at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) held in Dubai in December 2023 (see page 60). Latvia and Luxembourg, early donors to the Account, announced respective contributions of \$107,970 and \$540,500. Shortly afterwards, Ireland followed suit with a \$5.4 million contribution for 2024. Several other Member States announced political support for the Account with the expectation of additional dedicated funding in 2024.



Afghanistan. A young man collects household supplies, distributed after the earthquake. CERF allocated \$5 million to respond to shelter, household supplies, protection, food security, and health needs.

Photo: OCHA/Sayed Habib Bidell.

CERF allocations

CERF allocations in review

In 2023, CERF allocated about \$668 million – the third-highest annual amount in the history of the Fund – to assist 32.8 million people across 40 countries. More than half of CERF’s 2023 funding supported conflict-affected people, while one third was directed towards climate-related disasters. CERF supported timely humanitarian action in new and escalating crises with a total of \$392 million through its Rapid Response (RR) window, and provided much-needed support to 26 severely underfunded humanitarian crises with the allocation of nearly \$276 million through its Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) window – the largest annual UFE allocation to date. Thanks to CERF’s speed and flexibility, CERF-funded RR projects started, on average, 1.5 working days after the initial submission of funding applications.

In 2023, the world experienced an escalation in conflicts and an increasing frequency of climate shocks. By the end of the year, an estimated 363 million people needed humanitarian assistance – a 33 per cent increase from 2022. UN-led humanitarian appeals requested \$56.7 billion to assist 245 million people in 69 countries.¹ Overall funding for humanitarian appeals, however, experienced a 25 per cent decrease compared to 2022, resulting in the widest funding gap in history, with only 38 per cent of appeal requirements funded.



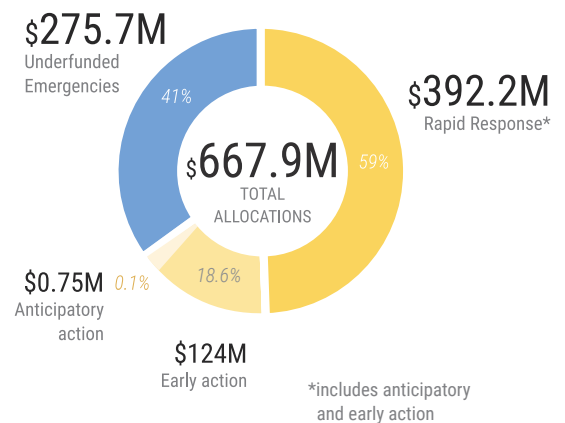
In 2023, as humanitarian needs continued to grow in magnitude and severity, CERF was able to respond to underfunded emergencies, not least in Sudan, DRC and Afghanistan. Sweden is dedicated to reducing the gap between humanitarian needs and available funding. CERF is well-positioned to deliver on that priority and to respond to both new and protracted crises.

Johan Forssell, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Sweden

Against this backdrop, CERF remained at the forefront of the global humanitarian response, allocating an impressive \$667.9 million to support critical life-saving assistance for 32.8 million people across 40 countries.

CERF FUNDING BY WINDOW

In US\$



CERF/OCHA define anticipatory action as acting ahead of predicted hazards to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. This ideally involves a framework, with pre-agreed activities and triggers, that facilitates the rapid release of pre-arranged financing. Early action allocations are made without a formal framework on a 'no-regrets basis' while a crisis is still emerging or developing and when information is still incomplete and uncertain; or are made partially based on forecasts and projections.

¹ [OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2023, December Update](#)

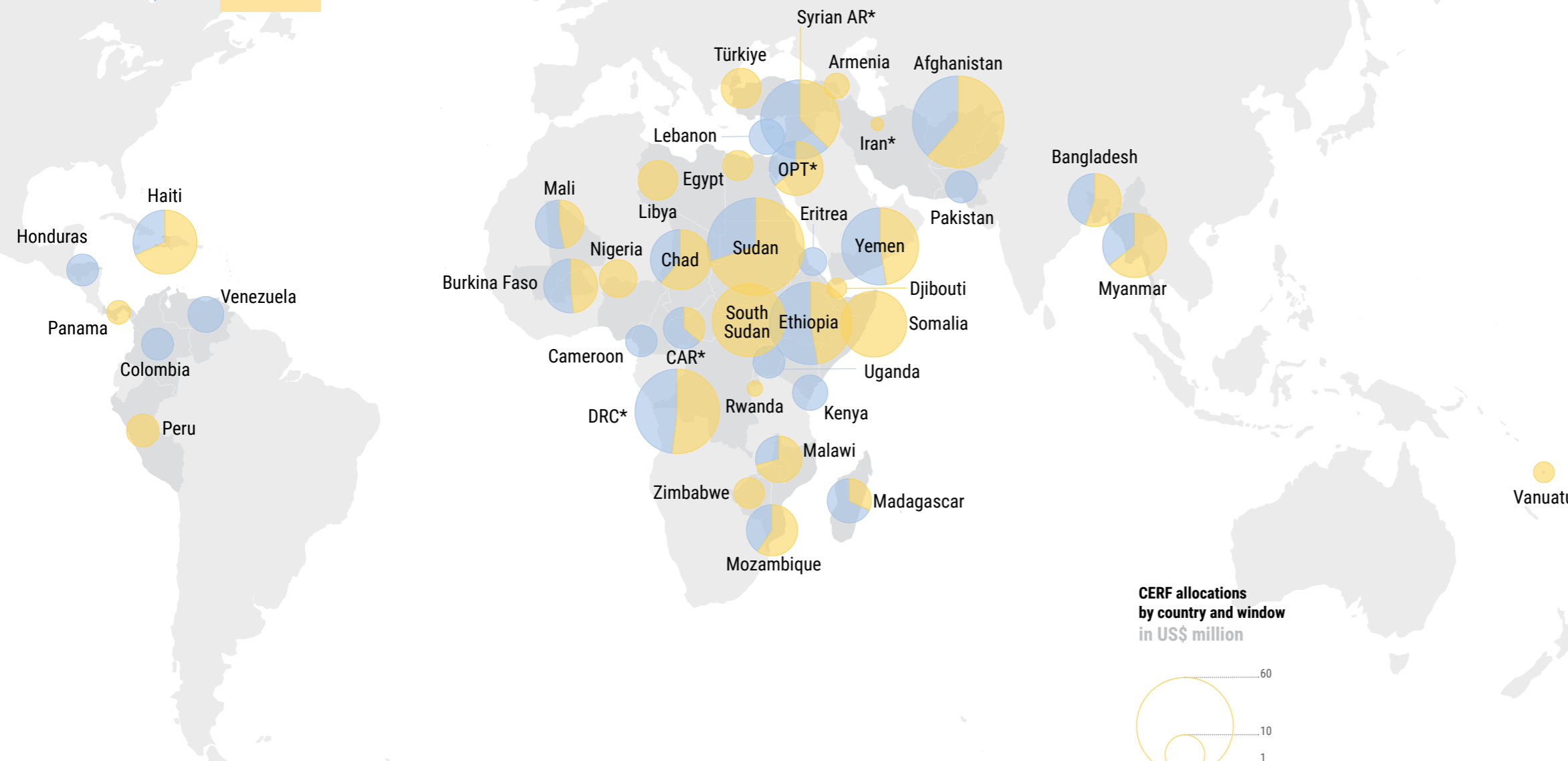
IN 2023, CERF ALLOCATED

\$667.9M

TO ENABLE LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE FOR

32.8M PEOPLE IN

40 COUNTRIES

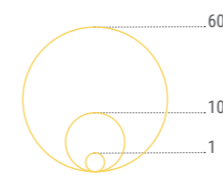


Allocations by country and window

in US\$ million

Sudan	60.1
Afghanistan	53.7
Democratic Republic of the Congo	45.8
Ethiopia	43.5
Syrian Arab Republic	40.0
Yemen	38.0
South Sudan	34.0
Somalia	28.0
Myanmar	26.4
Haiti	26.3
Chad	23.0
Occupied Palestinian Territory	18.7
Burkina Faso	18.7
Bangladesh	18.0
Mozambique	16.8
Mali	15.0
Malawi	13.8
Madagascar	12.5
Central African Republic	11.0
Türkiye	10.2
Libya	10.0
Nigeria	9.0
Venezuela	8.2
Kenya	8.0
Lebanon	8.0
Peru	6.9
Colombia	6.5
Uganda	6.5
Honduras	6.5
Pakistan	6.5
Cameroon	6.4
Zimbabwe	6.0
Egypt	5.8
Eritrea	5.0
Armenia	4.0
Panama	3.5
Vanuatu	2.8
Djibouti	2.5
Rwanda	1.5
Islamic Republic of Iran	1.0

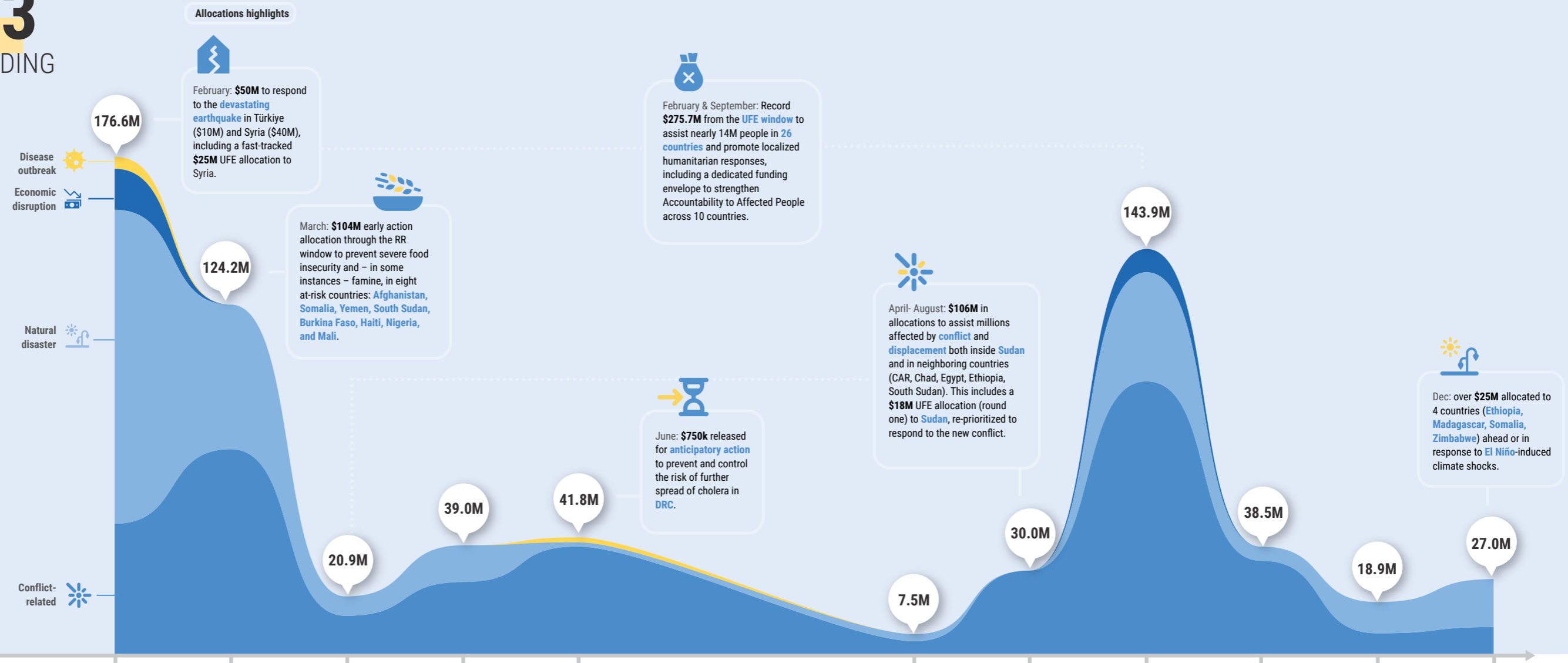
CERF allocations by country and window in US\$ million



● Rapid Response window
● Underfunded Emergencies window

* CAR - Central African Republic
DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo
Iran - Islamic Republic of Iran
OPT - Occupied Palestinian Territory
Syria AR - Syrian Arab Republic

2023 CERF FUNDING TIMELINE



Allocations breakdown

February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
25.0M ● Syrian AR*	18.0M ● Yemen	14.0M ● Chad	10.0M ● Myanmar	22.0M ● Sudan	5.0M ● Ethiopia	20.0M ● Sudan	12.0M ● OPT*	10.0M ● Somalia	10.0M ● Ethiopia	10.0M ● Afghanistan
23.0M ● Ethiopia	18.0M ● Somalia	6.9M ● Peru	9.0M ● Haiti	13.8M ● DRC*	2.5M ● Djibouti	10.0M ● South Sudan	10.0M ● DRC*	10.0M ● DRC*	7.0M ● Myanmar	8.0M ● Ethiopia
22.0M ● DRC*	18.0M ● Afghanistan		8.0M ● South Sudan	3.5M ● Panama			20.7M ● Afghanistan	7.5M ● Ethiopia	1.1M ● Vanuatu	5.0M ● Zimbabwe
18.1M ● Sudan	16.0M ● South Sudan		5.0M ● Egypt	1.5M ● Rwanda			20.0M ● Yemen	5.0M ● Afghanistan	0.8M ● Egypt	4.0M ● Madagascar
15.0M ● Syrian AR*	10.0M ● Mozambique		4.0M ● CAR*	1.0M ● Zimbabwe			10.0M ● Libya	4.0M ● Armenia		
10.2M ● Türkiye	9.0M ● Burkina Faso		3.0M ● Bangladesh				9.6M ● Burkina Faso	4.0M ● Bangladesh		
9.0M ● Chad	9.0M ● Haiti						9.4M ● Myanmar	6.7M ● OPT*		
8.5M ● Madagascar	9.0M ● Nigeria						8.4M ● Bangladesh	6.5M ● Uganda		
	7.0M ● Mali						8.3M ● Haiti	6.3M ● Cameroon		
	5.5M ● Malawi						8.2M ● Venezuela	4.0M ● Bangladesh		
	3.0M ● Bangladesh							4.0M ● Malawi		
	1.7M ● Vanuatu									

- Rapid Response window
- Underfunded Emergency window

* CAR - Central African Republic
 DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo
 Iran - Islamic Republic of Iran
 OPT - occupied Palestinian territory
 Syria AR - Syrian Arab Republic

Jump-starting time-critical operations through the Rapid Response window

In 2023, the RR window continued to be a critical source of funding for jump-starting operations in response to, and in anticipation of, emerging and rapidly deteriorating emergencies. CERF allocated \$392 million through the RR window, 59 per cent of total allocations in 2023. These funds enabled UN agencies and partners to provide immediate life-saving assistance to 19 million people in humanitarian emergencies across 31 countries, including through anticipatory and early action. Throughout the year, CERF funding proved to be decisive in enabling time-critical and life-saving responses to new humanitarian crises.



Türkiye. Women participate in a psychosocial-support group. CERF funding supported protection activities like this one, in the aftermath of the earthquake. Photo: IOM.



Responding to time-critical needs in Türkiye and Syria

In the early morning of 6 February 2023, a devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake, followed by thousands of aftershocks, struck the area on the border of Türkiye and Syria. The earthquake, the second largest in Türkiye in a century, claimed over 50,000 lives in Türkiye and some 5,900 in Syria, and left hundreds of thousands, including many refugees, without access to shelter, heating and basic supplies amid freezing temperatures.

In response, CERF took swift action via its RR window, allocating \$10 million to Türkiye and \$15 million to Syria. The allocations promptly enabled a rapid and coordinated response, addressing urgent and life-saving needs. This funding allowed UN agencies and partners to rapidly jump-start humanitarian efforts within hours of the earthquake and provide life-saving assistance to over 2 million affected people. This support was pivotal in helping survivors to cope with the harsh winter, providing essential supplies such as food, shelter, blankets and clothing, as well as restoring

essential services – from WASH to education. The allocations also facilitated enhanced communication, resource sharing and joint planning among humanitarian actors on the ground, while supporting the capacity of national and local authorities and strengthening their collaboration with UN agencies – leading to a more efficient and impactful response.

The CERF RR allocations were followed by an additional \$25 million fast-tracked from CERF’s UFE window to boost critical protection, health and other types of services for over 1 million people in Syria. CERF funding was complemented with allocations from the Syria Cross-border Fund (\$91 million) and the Syria Humanitarian Fund (\$28 million), ensuring continuity in scaling up the humanitarian response and sustaining critical services for affected communities in Syria. Combined, these three OCHA-managed Funds provided over \$119 million to humanitarian partners across the two countries.

In focus: Speed of 2023 CERF RR allocations

When emergencies strike, CERF typically funds the initial phase of emergency response, allowing time to mobilize additional resources for the continuation and expansion of relief efforts. In 2023, CERF enabled RR-funded relief programmes to start, on average, only 1.5 working days after the CERF secretariat received the initial funding application.* CERF disbursed RR grants, on average, 10 working days after the original submission. This was the fastest processing of allocations in CERF’s history and a significant improvement compared to 2022, when CERF enabled RR-funded operations to start, on average, 3.7 working days after receiving the initial funding request, with RR grants disbursed, on average, within 12 working days.



With multiple ongoing humanitarian crises and disasters worldwide, fast and effective ways to ensure humanitarian assistance are key to quickly reach people and save lives, starting from the most vulnerable groups. Also in 2023, Italy has supported CERF interventions and operations to deliver rapid and coordinated humanitarian responses.

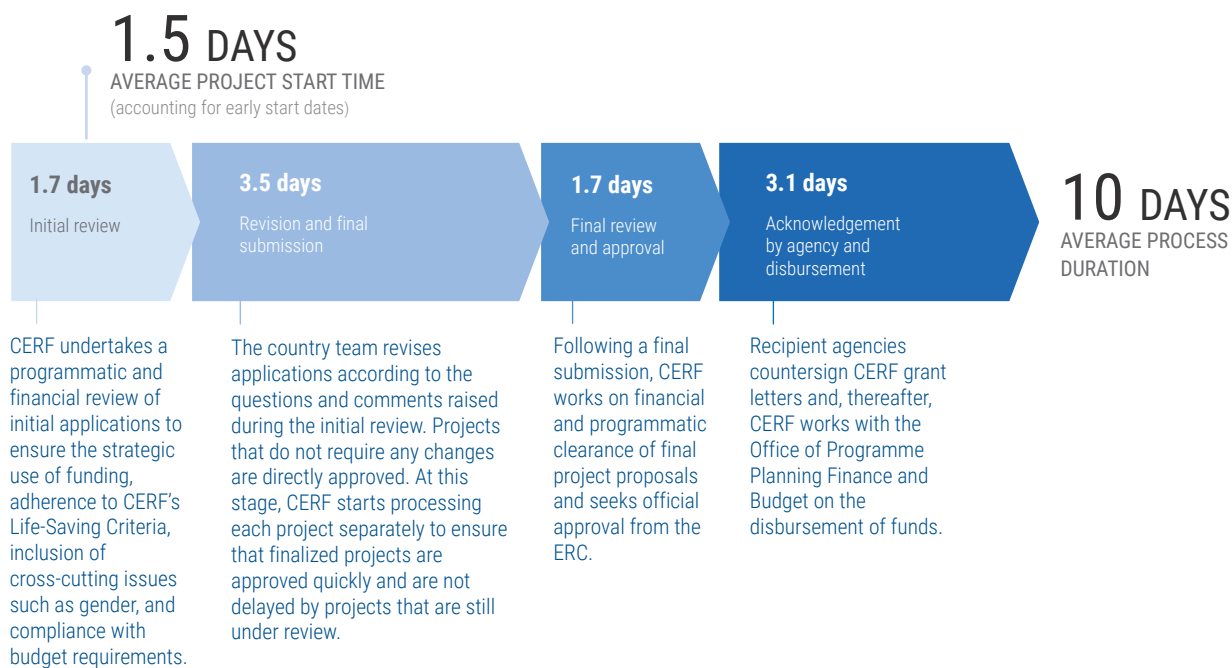
Edmondo Cirielli, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

In the most critical emergencies, CERF applies internal emergency fast-track procedures to speed up the processing and disbursement of time-critical allocations. This entails deprioritizing other work-streams to focus the CERF secretariat’s resources on expediting priority tasks, providing additional support to country teams, and applying lighter fast-track processes where possible. CERF evokes these procedures in exceptional cases, when a humanitarian situation requires an immediate response to kick-start collective action and create momentum.



Information on the mechanics and parameters of funding decisions can be found in the [CERF Handbook](#).

* Recipient agencies can charge expenditures to the CERF project for activities undertaken up to six weeks before the receipt of CERF funds, using their internal reserves to initiate the response in the knowledge that CERF funds will be forthcoming. An early implementation date can be approved if it does not predate the onset of the emergency..

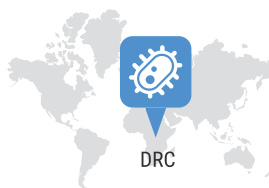


Anticipatory action support

In 2023, CERF continued to support the roll-out of anticipatory action (AA) frameworks. During the year, only one framework was activated, with CERF allocating \$750,000 for anticipatory action in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for cholera.

This brings CERF's total allocations for anticipatory action to date to \$89.4 million, benefiting Bangladesh, the DRC, Ethiopia, Nepal, Niger, Somalia and South Sudan. While only one AA framework was triggered during the year, CERF further increased its pre-committed funding for other frameworks, up to \$98.3 million by the end of the year (see page 60).

The DRC. At the water taps in Bushagara displaced persons camp, CERF funding supported new water stations and showers here.
Photo: UNICEF/John James.



Getting ahead of cholera outbreaks in the DRC

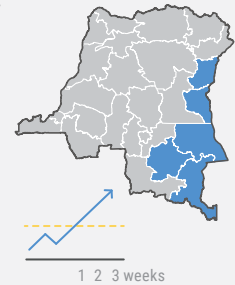
Cholera is resurging in many parts of the world. In the eastern part of the DRC, it continues to blight the lives of people, compounded by years of under-development, conflict and extreme climate events. During 2023, these challenges further exacerbated an already complex health situation in the country.

When the threshold for triggering the AA framework for cholera in the DRC was reached following a steep increase of suspected cases in the cholera-endemic Tanganyika Province, CERF promptly released \$750,000 to prevent and control the risk of further spread of the disease. The allocation allowed WHO, UNICEF and their partners to scale up the cholera response at a critical moment, with the aim of preventing

DRC TRIGGER MECHANISM

Scenario 1

An anomalous number of cases or deaths over three weeks in any health zone in a province where cholera is **endemic** (regularly occurring). These provinces are: North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Haut-Lomami and Haut-Katanga.



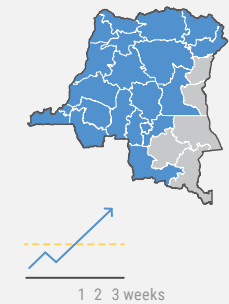
Scenario 2

Whenever there is an **external event** that increases the risk of cholera (e.g. floods, displacement), and CERF makes a regular Rapid Response allocation for this shock in an endemic province.



Scenario 3

An anomalous number of cases or deaths over three weeks in any health zone within a province where cholera is **not endemic** (not regularly occurring).



clusters of cases from escalating into a large-scale outbreak. CERF funding was directed towards a set of pre-agreed actions, including improving access to safe water and sanitation, promoting hygiene practices in at-risk communities, and providing medical case management. These activities benefited nearly 230,000 people, ensuring they were better prepared and received faster, more efficient and dignified humanitarian assistance. This allocation follows an earlier release of \$750,000 that was triggered at the end of 2022 by an increase in cases of suspected cholera in North Kivu. The earlier allocation also enabled timely health and WASH assistance to some 230,000 people.



Providing a lifeline for people in crises through the Underfunded Emergencies window

In 2023, CERF reinforced its commitment to leave no one behind by allocating a record \$275.7 million through its UFE window, boosting critically underfunded operations in 26 countries. The UFE allocations enabled UN agencies and partners to deliver life-saving assistance to nearly 14 million people in countries with alarmingly high levels of unmet humanitarian needs and critical funding gaps.

CERF funding through the UFE window was vital in sustaining and scaling up underfunded interventions, helping the humanitarian community reach the most vulnerable and neglected people. In Myanmar, for example, \$9 million was allocated via the UFE window to support humanitarian operations at a time when an unprecedented 65 per cent of its Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was unfunded. The allocation prioritized areas with elevated humanitarian needs and with populations severely affected by displacement, but where response coverage was limited due to insufficient funding. CERF support was particularly critical for enabling an integrated response to the needs of people who have been displaced multiple times in difficult-to-access locations.

For Norway, CERF is a key mechanism that responds quickly and effectively to humanitarian crises. CERF is crucial in providing much-needed support for underfunded humanitarian crises. We are pleased that CERF allocated close to \$276 million to underfunded, protracted and neglected crises, including Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and Ethiopia. Norway is providing predictable, long-term support to CERF. We encourage others to do the same.

*Anne Beathe Tvinnereim,
Minister for International Development, Norway*

Allocations through the UFE window also helped shed light on underfunded emergencies. For example, CERF allocated \$9 million to Burkina Faso, where more than 570,000 new displacements were recorded between January and September 2023, mostly towards urban areas. The allocation ensured humanitarian assistance and protection services for 170,000 displaced people and host communities in urban settings. CERF funding was strategically leveraged to raise awareness of the critical needs of displaced people in urban areas and secure additional funding for displacement management in these contexts, which, at the time, had not received sufficient attention and resources due to the emphasis on humanitarian action in hard-to-reach locations.

Burkina Faso. CERF funding supported livelihoods assistance - like small livestock - for people affected by the conflicts in Burkina Faso.
Photo: OCHA/Pierre Peron.



As part of the second round of UFE allocations, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) added a dedicated funding envelope of nearly \$5 million to strengthen collective Accountability to Affected People systems across 10 countries. CERF funding supported activities and systems to identify and ensure the inclusion of minorities and marginalized groups, as well as initiatives designed to improve access to information and systematically gather and evaluate beneficiary perceptions, including through collective feedback mechanisms (see page 64).

CERF funding through the UFE window was also used to promote localized humanitarian responses

by encouraging Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) to include local partners in defining priorities from the outset and set ambitious targets for the amount of UFE funding to be sub-granted to national and local implementing partners. As a result, about one quarter of funding from the 2023 UFE rounds was sub-granted to national and local organizations – in line with the achievements of the second 2022 UFE round, and a significant increase compared to CERF’s historical average of around 15 per cent (see page 63). For instance, a CERF \$6 million allocation in Cameroon was used to improve access and address the needs of 138,000 vulnerable people in hard-to-reach areas through a more localized, accountable and inclusive response. This entailed adopting a commu-

nity-based approach, including through new partnerships with local actors who were working in areas that had not previously been accessible due to insecurity or physical access constraints, and who enjoyed community acceptance. UN recipient agencies sub-granted around 25 per cent of the allocation to local partners and provided them with capacity-building on technical standards, AAP, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and humanitarian access.

Bridging critical cash-flow gaps with CERF loans

In 2023, CERF’s loan facility helped cover critical cash-flow gaps that were hampering humanitarian operations. For instance, in June, to avert the immense environmental and humanitarian consequences of a potential oil-spill from a decaying Floating Storage and Offloading vessel (the FSO Safer) off the coast of Yemen, CERF provided a \$20 million loan to UNDP to bring the UN-led salvage operation up to the minimum level of funds needed to start activities. The operation, which transferred over 1 million barrels of oil off the FSO Safer to a replacement vessel, successfully averted an environmental catastrophe threatening the livelihoods of nearby communities, and helped to save an estimated \$20 billion in cleanup costs. The loan was repaid in early 2024.

Yemen. Workers at the FSO SAFER salvage operation, averting a massive oil spill off the coast of Yemen.
Photo: OCHA



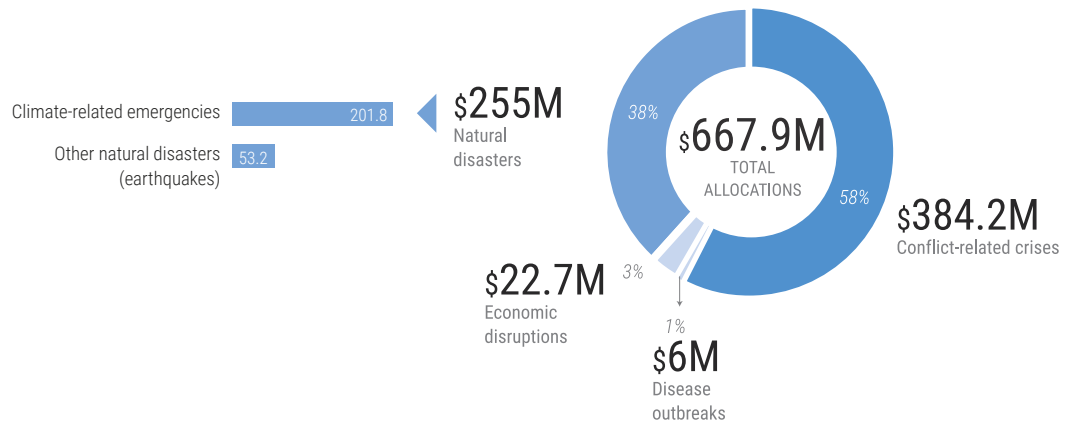
The main drivers of CERF allocations

In 2023, CERF allocations were once again shaped by the main drivers of humanitarian need. In line with the previous year, over half of CERF allocations went towards addressing humanitarian needs driven by conflicts. Nearly one third of 2023 CERF funding was allocated in response to climate-related emergencies (droughts, floods, storms and cold waves), while 8 per cent went towards non-climate induced natural disasters, namely earthquakes. Less than 1 per cent of

2023 CERF funding was allocated solely in response to disease outbreaks. Another 3 per cent went towards responses to humanitarian needs caused by severe economic disruption.

CERF FUNDING BY EMERGENCY TYPE

in US\$



Bangladesh. An indigenous floodaffected smallholder farmer and receiver of CERF-funded lifesaving agricultural inputs such as rice, seeds, fertilizer and spades working in her vegetable field. Nearly one third of 2023 CERF funding was allocated in response to climate-related emergencies. Photo: FAO/Saikat Mojumder





Conflict-related crises

In 2023, conflict continued to be the major driver of humanitarian needs. CERF responded by allocating \$384.2 million – nearly 58 per cent of its annual funding – to assist some 16.3 million conflict-affected people in 22 countries. Over half of this amount (\$194.3 million) was allocated in response to conflict-related internal displacement, assisting some 9 million people, while \$62.3 million, or 16 per cent, was provided for multisectoral response to assist over 2 million refugees. This represents more than double the amount allocated to assist refugees in conflict-related emergencies in 2022 (\$26 million) and was largely driven by the massive displacement of people fleeing the conflict in Sudan. Nearly a quarter of CERF funding to conflict-related crises (\$91.5 million) went towards assisting almost 4 million people caught up in active violent conflicts in their place of origin, while \$36 million, or 9 per cent, was allocated in response to the humanitarian needs of 1 million people in post-conflict contexts.

CERF's RESPONSE TO CONFLICT-RELATED CRISES



\$237.9M

Rapid Response

\$384.2M

Allocated

\$146.3M

Underfunded
Emergencies



16.3M

People assisted



22

Countries

Gaza, OPT. Children wait outside a clinic tent to be assessed for malnutrition. CERF's Rapid Response allocation supported essential medical supplies and equipment to support Primary Health Services.
Photo: UNICEF





Responding to the humanitarian impact of escalating violence in Gaza

In the wake of renewed hostilities between Israel and Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza since 7 October, the ongoing violence – unprecedented in its scale and nature – has taken a significant human toll.

Within two weeks of the start of hostilities, more than half of Gaza's population – approximately 1.4 million people – had been displaced, essential services had been severely disrupted due to a lack of electricity, water and essential supplies, and widespread infrastructure damage, while the food security situation had rapidly deteriorated.

As the conflict intensified, CERF responded by swiftly launching a \$12 million allocation on 27 October to provide a time-critical response to the most pressing and life-threatening needs of people affected by the conflict. CERF funded ready-to-eat meals, shelter for internally displaced people (IDPs), the provision of critical water supplies, and the delivery of essential medical supplies, disposables, fuel and equipment to support the healthcare system in Gaza. The allocation supported WFP, WHO, UNICEF and UNRWA in scaling up relief efforts – as outlined in [Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory \(OPT\)](#) – assisting some 372,600 people.



CERF also fast-tracked an additional \$6.7 million UFE allocation for OPT that predated the 7 October events, to fill critical gaps in the ongoing response in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This included support to child protection, gender-based violence (GBV), mine action and emergency education. The fast-tracked allocation demonstrated CERF's speed and flexibility in responding to rapidly changing environments, enabling UN agencies on the ground to assist over 1.2 million people.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the Humanitarian Country Team members, CERF funds have been used in complementarity with allocations from the OPT Humanitarian Fund, totalling over \$53 million, ensuring an optimized use of available resources across sectors and geographical areas.

Gaza, OPT. At Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, medical personnel treat a man injured in airstrikes.

Photo: WHO

Gaza. Children who were displaced by the fighting eat fortified biscuits provided as humanitarian assistance in southern Gaza.
Photo: WFP/Ali Jadallahun



CERF supporting emergency rations in Gaza

Gaza. From day one of the conflict, Mahmoud has had to make impossible choices to ensure the well-being of his family. "We are forced to ration our meals, going hungry to ensure that the children have enough to eat. We skip meals and eat less so the kids can eat a meal or two maximum a day," Mahmoud recounts.

Taking care of an extended family of 30, Mahmoud was displaced first from Gaza City to Zawayda, then onwards to Deir Elbalah, where all of them are living in makeshift tents.

Before the war, Mahmoud earned only \$130 a month as a farmer. In the current circumstances, this is nowhere near enough to secure food and shelter. "It's hard for me to watch the kids and myself lose weight due to the lack of sustenance," he added.

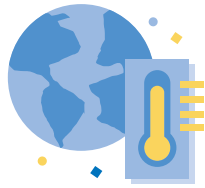
While Mahmoud once prayed for rain to nourish his crops, now he fears the rain each day. It could destroy his makeshift shelter, ruining his food and few belongings.

Mahmoud's mother cooks food for the family. With CERF support, the family received ready-to-eat food packages from WFP. "When the WFP food parcel came, my mother said she'd change the lunch plans to include green beans, which the kids were craving," he said. For weeks, the family had eaten only rice. The children also enjoyed the fortified biscuits that came in the package.

The rapid disbursement of funding from CERF in October 2023 enabled UN agencies and partners to address the most pressing and life-threatening needs arising from the ongoing war. Among other things, it allowed WFP to provide emergency food for more than 100,000 displaced people who had sought safety in southern governorates. The food arrived in 'ready-to-eat' food parcels that included canned food and nutrition needs for 15 days.



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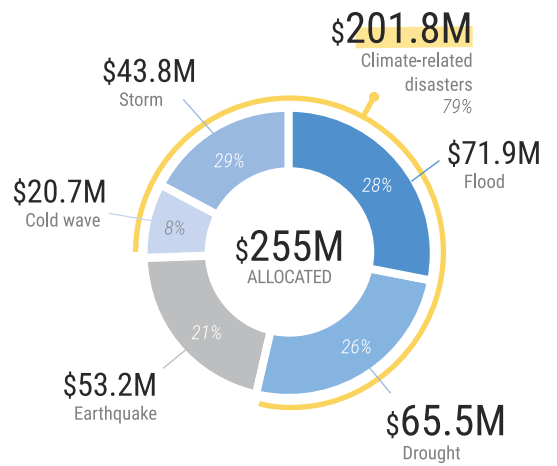
Natural disasters

In 2023, CERF allocated \$255 million, or 38 per cent of all CERF funding, to respond to natural disasters, providing life-saving assistance to nearly 14 million people in 22 countries. Only eight of these countries had an existing HRP. While the amount allocated towards climate-related disasters (\$201.8 million) was similar to the previous year, allocations for other types of natural disasters (\$53.2 million) almost tripled compared to 2022 (\$19 million), largely as a result of the devastating earthquakes that affected Türkiye and Syria, and Afghanistan.



CERF FUNDING TO NATURAL DISASTERS

in US\$



Afghanistan. Severe earthquakes, with magnitudes exceeding 6, and aftershocks have occurred in Herat Province since 7 October 2023. CERF funding made humanitarian aid in earthquake affected areas possible.
Photo: OCHA/Sayed Habib Bidell.

CERF's RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS



\$255M
Allocated

\$148.3 M
Rapid Response

\$106.6M
Underfunded Emergencies



13.9M
People assisted



22
Countries

Climate-related disasters

Climate change is already contributing to a steep rise in humanitarian needs worldwide. In 2023, an estimated 73 million people were affected by climate-related disasters and required immediate assistance.²

In response, CERF allocated \$201.8 million, or 30 per cent of its 2023 funding, to climate-related emergencies, assisting some 10 million people in 19 countries.

Libya. Floods in September destroyed parts of Derna's city centre.

Photo: OCHA/
Basma Ourfali



Denmark has supported CERF since its start in 2006. CERF is one of our most effective tools for financing humanitarian action and an excellent example of global solidarity, targeting both underfunded emergencies and new crises. It is encouraging that CERF has recently established a Climate Action Account to push for climate financing to reach those most in need. CERF already used more than a quarter of its funding to address the humanitarian consequences of the climate crisis. An example is supporting action against El Niño-related crises in parts of Ethiopia in 2023 when 1.5 million people were affected by flooding and mudslides.

Dan Jørgensen, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy, Denmark

² Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, [\[2023 Disasters in numbers: A Significant Year of Disaster Impact\]](#). Calculation includes all natural hazard disaster groups listed by EM-DAT CRED except earthquake and volcanic activity.

One of these countries was Libya, which was struck by a storm, causing flash floods that directly impacted approximately 884,000 people across five provinces. The devastating floods led to the loss of lives and extensive damage to infrastructure, particularly in towns along rivers and in coastal areas. The storm compounded an already challenging humanitarian situation characterized by political instability, conflict and displacement.

In response, CERF allocated \$10 million across the shelter, WASH, health and protection sectors to address immediate and critical humanitarian needs, with a particular focus on at-risk demographics such as women, children, people living with disabilities and migrants. Nearly all CERF-supported projects started within one day of the flooding, assisting over 259,000 affected people by restoring critical services and fortifying protection mechanisms.

The focus on immediate life-saving measures, coupled with a comprehensive approach to addressing the diverse needs of affected communities, highlights the strategic focus of CERF's intervention. This allocation not only contributed to alleviating suffering in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, but also strengthened systems and mechanisms that can support affected people in coping with future shocks of a similar kind.

Throughout its history, CERF has played an important role in responding to climate crises, including through anticipatory and early action (see page 60). Since 2006, the Fund has spent about \$2.4 billion (26 per cent of its total allocations) to support humanitarian action in response to climate-related disasters. Most of this funding was provided through the RR window, which emphasizes CERF's comparative advantage in responding quickly to climate-related shocks and reaching those most in need.

In many cases, CERF invests in life-saving projects that also support communities in adapting to future climate events, especially in the WASH, health, agriculture and livelihoods sectors, and through social protection/cash transfers. For instance, a \$4 million early action allocation to Madagascar (see page 62) allowed FAO to assist 45,000 people at risk of drought-induced food insecurity. This support included agricultural and livestock inputs, such as drought-resistant seeds, and training on climate-smart agricultural practices. As well as providing life-saving

food security assistance, this CERF-funded project also helped improve food availability and accessibility, along with diversifying income sources for affected households, making them more resilient to future shocks. Additionally, the funding helped establish Early Warning and Anticipatory Action committees, enabling communities to create action plans based on weather forecasts and access climate information directly for better preparedness and adaptation.

Through its growing anticipatory action portfolio, CERF also disburses funding ahead of climate hazards to mitigate their humanitarian impacts. Since 2020, it has provided nearly \$88 million for humanitarian anticipatory action for predictable climate shocks. While no anticipatory action framework was triggered in response to climate-related disasters in 2023, during the year the ERC endorsed two new frameworks in Bangladesh and Fiji for tropical cyclones, and agreed to continue CERF support for improved frameworks in Bangladesh and Nepal for floods, in the Philippines for storms, and in Niger for droughts (see page 60).



CERF Climate Action Account

CERF is a leading global humanitarian funding tool for responding to climate-related humanitarian emergencies. In recent years, the Fund has spearheaded innovative humanitarian financing solutions for climate-related responses, including collective anticipatory action at scale.

To better support people suffering the humanitarian consequences of climate change, CERF launched its Climate Action Account at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai in December 2023.

The account is designed to attract new and additional financing to help address the ever-increasing humanitarian impacts of climate-related disasters worldwide. This will allow CERF to scale up climate-related anticipatory action, early action and response. Channelling such funding through CERF is particularly effective because of its unique ability to provide support in challenging contexts of fragility, conflict and violence, where communities often face heightened risks. The Climate Action Account received immediate political and donor support, with concrete pledges from Ireland, Latvia and Luxembourg.

Contributions to the Account are consolidated and attributed exclusively to CERF's climate-related disaster portfolio, which encompasses anticipatory action, early action and response. This assures donors that their additional climate financing contributions will be directed towards addressing the impact of climate-related disasters. Additionality of funding is key for the success of the Climate Action Account, allowing CERF to scale up its climate-related action while



In 2023, CERF continued its vital role in providing rapid and life-saving aid during humanitarian crises. Luxembourg is proud to be a consistent and predictable supporter of CERF and was among the first countries to support its new Climate Action Account. This new initiative has already contributed to an urgent response to floods in the DRC in 2024, marking a crucial step towards addressing the humanitarian consequences of climate change.

Xavier Bettel, Vice Prime Minister, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Luxembourg

at the same time ensuring sufficient resources to respond to other types of emergencies. It is therefore important that contributions to the Account are made up of resources that otherwise would not have been available to CERF.

The introduction of the Account is in line with CERF's life-saving humanitarian mandate, and preserves its established, needs-based decision-making processes and administrative and operational frameworks. CERF allocations will continue to focus on the most pressing humanitarian needs, in an independent, impartial and neutral manner, and CERF will continue to enable humanitarian partners to swiftly initiate relief efforts in response to, or in anticipation of, humanitarian disasters no matter the cause.



More information about the Account can be found here: [The CERF Climate Action Account](#).



Disease outbreaks

CERF's RESPONSE TO DISEASE OUTBREAKS



\$6M

Allocated (RR)



3

Countries



6.5M

People assisted

In 2023, CERF once again provided support to humanitarian responses to disease outbreaks in emergencies, with a total of \$6 million allocated to three countries (the DRC, Malawi and Zimbabwe) to specifically respond to cholera outbreaks. During the year, several other CERF allocations in response to droughts, storms or displacement (notably in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Sudan) included project components to respond to cholera outbreaks, with an additional \$20.6 million.³ The cumulative figures for 2023 are slightly lower in comparison to 2022, when CERF allocated \$29 million to respond to 11 disease outbreaks (including cholera, Ebola, measles and Rift Valley fever) across nine countries.

³ This underscores the multi-dimensional nature of complex humanitarian emergencies. For reporting purposes, these allocations have been classified either under 'Natural Disasters' or 'Conflict-related'.

Malawi. Volunteers setting up an Oral Rehydration Point in Lilongwe. CERF enabled WHO to investigate outbreaks, transport samples, perform laboratory testing, trace contacts of patients, set up field hospitals, ensure access to safe water and sanitation especially for Cholera. Photo: WHO Malawi

As the number of cholera cases in African countries rose again in 2023,⁴ CERF funding assisted some 1.5 million people across the continent through allocations directly triggered by cholera outbreaks; an additional 3.7 million people at risk of cholera were supported through broader allocations in response to natural disasters and conflict.⁵

Thanks to its RR window, CERF was uniquely positioned not only to support immediate responses to cholera, but also to pre-empt the development of large-scale cholera outbreaks, as demonstrated by the anticipatory action framework for cholera in the DRC (see page 31). In June 2023, CERF also allocated \$1 million for early action in Zimbabwe, which was experiencing an abnormal increase in daily cholera cases, averaging 60-80 a day. To reduce the continued spread of cholera and avoid overburdening the healthcare system, the CERF allocation focused on activities to stop the transmission of the disease, providing access to safe water, and promoting risk communication and community engagement – assisting some 500,000 people. CERF funding was also used to strengthen capacity against future outbreaks by supporting surveillance, case management and infection prevention control.



⁴ [Multi-country outbreak of cholera, External situation report #10 - 11 January 2024 \(who.int\)](#)

⁵ For reporting purposes, these 3.7 million beneficiaries have been classified either under the 'Natural Disasters' or 'Conflict-related' caseload.



Economic disruptions

CERF's RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC DISRUPTIONS



\$22.7M

Allocated (UFE)



3

Countries



1.1M

People assisted

In addition to conflicts, disease outbreaks and natural disasters, CERF provided \$22.7 million, or 3 per cent of the total 2023 funding, in response to humanitarian needs caused by socioeconomic drivers, namely severe economic disruptions. The largest portion, some \$8.2 million, was allocated to Venezuela to strengthen basic service delivery and livelihood support for the most at-risk demographics. A prolonged sociopolitical and economic crisis and critical levels of underfunding have left the population with limited access to essential services and economic opportu-

nities. CERF also provided an \$8 million allocation in response to the persisting impact of the economic and financial crisis in Lebanon, and nearly \$7 million to mitigate the impacts of displacement and food insecurity in nine prioritized departments of Honduras. This enabled UN agencies and partners to assist over 1 million people across the three countries. All funding was channelled through the UFE window, which again highlights CERF's role as a strategic instrument for addressing critical humanitarian gaps in neglected crises.



Venezuela. A woman repairs her fishing net, part of a package from WFP to help communities improve their food security by strengthening local practices.

Photo: WFP

Ensuring needs-based sectoral response

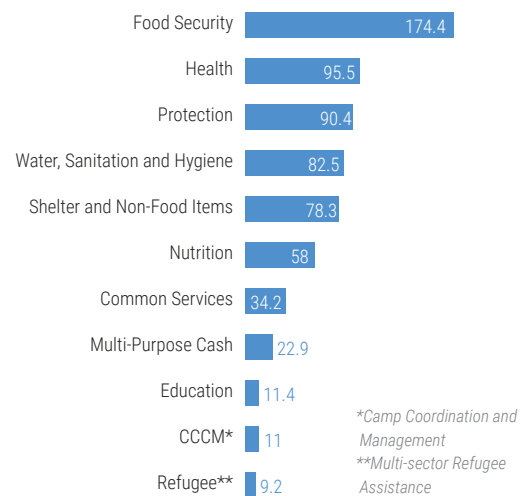
CERF allocations are based on strategic funding priorities that are informed by solid needs assessments and determined by the RC/HCs in consultation with the country teams. A joint application process sets the collective priorities of humanitarian partners and ensures a well-informed and prioritized CERF response across humanitarian sectors.

Following consecutive failed rainy seasons in several food-insecure countries, an increase in the intensity and frequency of flooding, and the compounding impacts of conflicts and rising food prices, in 2023 the food sector was once again the most funded sector. In total, \$174.4 million – more than a quarter of CERF’s allocations in 2023 – went to the food security sector, including for life-saving food assistance (\$115.1 million) and emergency agriculture programmes (\$59.3 million). Funding to this sector, which was proportionally in line with 2022 levels, was vital for food and agriculture responses that benefited some 7.6 million people in 33 countries. WFP was the top recipient agency for this sector, receiving nearly \$116 million, or 66 per cent of total CERF funding to the food security sector in 2023.

In 2023, health remained among CERF’s top recipient sectors, accounting for 14 per cent of overall funding (\$95 million). CERF-funded interventions in this sector enabled UN agencies to provide health services for over 17 million people across 36 countries. WHO was the top recipient agency for this sector, receiving \$68.8 million, or 72 per cent of total CERF funding to the health sector in 2023.

CERF FUNDING BY SECTOR

in US\$ million



CERF helping people stave off famine

In 2023, the global food crisis continued unabated, with the number of people experiencing acute food insecurity across high-risk countries increasing by 10 per cent compared to 2022, driven by the compounding effects of conflict, climate change and economic shocks.

In early 2023, CERF announced a combined allocation of \$250 million across its RR and UFE windows, with a significant focus on food insecurity. The first UFE allocation of 2023, totalling \$146 million to 12 countries, included countries with alarmingly high levels of food insecurity – namely Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Honduras, Madagascar, Pakistan and Sudan. A parallel complementary allocation of \$104 million from the RR window specifically targeted eight countries most at risk of severe food insecurity, including, in some cases, famine: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. In Mali, for instance, CERF funding enabled FAO, UNICEF, and WFP, in close collaboration with their local partners, to provide life-saving assistance across the nutrition, food security, and WASH sectors to over 530,000 people from host and displaced communities. The allocation, amounting to \$7 million, contributed

to avoiding a famine situation in northern Mali during the 2023 lean season, a time when the country was facing some of the highest levels of food insecurity in its recent history.

CERF prioritization was based on a thorough analysis of quantitative data on the scale, severity and risk of food insecurity in over 40 countries – including projections of future food insecurity – and consultations with the Global Network Against Food Crises, the UN Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator, and the High-Level Task Force on Famine Prevention.

The analysis helped identify countries with alarming numbers of people facing catastrophic and emergency levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification/IPC phase 5 and 4, respectively), and enabled the timely disbursement of funds towards early action (see page 60) to prevent a further deterioration in food security levels and avert famine. CERF’s response was not limited to the food security sector; CERF-funded projects also worked across the WASH, nutrition, protection, health and shelter sectors to address the multiple identified needs of the most food-insecure people.

* [Global Report on Food Crises 2023 Mid-Year Update | Food Security Information Network \(FSIN\) \(fsinplatform.org\)](https://www.fsinplatform.org/)

Afghanistan. Another Badakhshan farmer in his fields, sown with certified wheat seed.

Photo: FAO/Hashim Azizi.



Critical livelihoods support to prevent famine in Afghanistan



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Badakhshan Province, Afghanistan. Sharif, a 68-year-old farmer in Lowani village, says the last few years have been particularly difficult. Climate change has led to an increase in drought and floods, making it hard to keep the farm going. He supports his family of 10 on just half a hectare of land, with the hope of growing enough to eat and sell.

Of the 80 million people facing acute food insecurity in Afghanistan, about 80 per cent are in rural areas.

In response to the very fragile food security and nutrition situation, CERF allocated \$18 million from its Rapid Response window to support food security and nutrition response. The allocation focused on rural areas that are expected to face severe food insecurity – IPC level 4 or above.

Of the \$18 million, FAO received \$7 million to provide people in the worst affected areas with improved seeds and fertilizer, animal feed, and animals better suited to the harsh climate.

Sharif has been able to access improved varieties of wheat, as well as special fertilizer. This wheat is more resistant to Badakhshan's harsh climate – worsened by climate change – than other varieties. Sharif also joined a training course on how to grow the new wheat. He is now growing enough for his family to make bread, with plenty left over to sell.

The FAO programme also improved water irrigation systems in rural areas, including repairs to a critical canal that had been damaged. The project employed local builders to further support the local economy

In Somalia, CERF funding is helping to fight malnutrition

Mogadishu, Somalia. Decades of violence, several years of unprecedented drought, and major floods have severely affected people in Somalia, leading to increased displacement, food insecurity and malnutrition. An \$18 million allocation from the CERF Rapid Response window in 2023 helped to address the urgent needs of those most at risk.

Maryama – who lives in Mogadishu – has been struggling due to the relentless drought. Her life took a devastating turn when she lost her livestock and was left to provide for her children alone, without support from her extended family. Like many others, she was unable to find enough food for her family and the children were constantly hungry.

In July, the Mother and Child Hospital in Heliwa district – supported with essential life-saving medical supplies from WHO, with funding from CERF – admitted Maryama’s three-year-old daughter, Amina. At the hospital’s stabilization centre, Amina was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition, compounded by a range of medical complications. During her stay in hospital, Amina received essential medication and therapeutic milk to stabilize her and help her grow.

In the weeks that followed, Amina continued her journey towards full recovery as Maryama brought her to the hospital for ongoing outpatient treatment. Such was the impact of Amina’s recovery that her neighbours gave her a new name, ‘Xabaaal Diid’, meaning ‘triumph over illness’.

Alongside Amina’s treatment, the whole family received food and basic household supplies. “Without this, I would have certainly lost my daughter. As well as the treatment for her, we have been provided with three meals a day, food packages, a warm blanket and cleaning supplies,” recounts her mother.

“CERF assistance enables the Mother and Child Hospital to provide life-saving treatment and care for children like Amina, ensuring they have access to medical support and a chance for a better future,” explains Dr Mahmud, who works at the hospital.

Somalia. Maryama and her daughter at the clinic, accessing treatment for malnutrition. CERF is supporting stabilization centers across Somalia.

Photo: WHO/Ismail Taxta

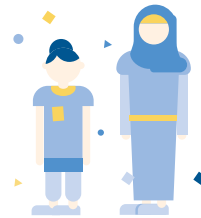


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Malawi. A woman receiving her support kit after displacement because of Cyclone Freddy.
Photo: UN Women Malawi



Enhancing gender equality

CERF funding continued to promote gender equality by effectively identifying and responding to the needs and priorities of women, girls, boys and men of various ages. RC/HCs are required to articulate how gender is considered as part of the allocation strategy when requesting CERF funding. Additionally, all CERF-funded projects are informed by a gender and age analysis, through the mandatory use of the Gender with Age Marker (GAM). This facilitates the design and implementation of inclusive projects that respond to gender and age (see page 64). In 2023, CERF allocated \$467 million, or 70 per cent of total CERF funding, to projects aimed at contributing to gender equality (those with a GAM score of 3 or 4).

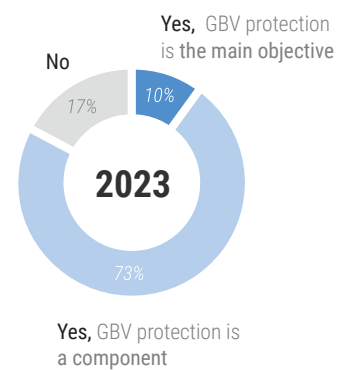
Protecting those most at risk

The protection of people affected by humanitarian crises is a central part of CERF-funded responses. The protection sector was CERF’s third most funded sector in 2023 (13 per cent of all funding), with \$90.4 million allocated to 33 countries – an increase from 2022, when 11 per cent of CERF funding went to protection interventions in 31 countries.

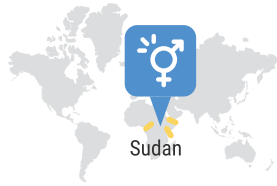
Protection from and response to GBV remained integral to CERF-funded humanitarian responses. In 2023, 307 projects, or 83 per cent of all projects, had GBV protection or response either as their main objective or as a project component – in line with 2022 results. The percentage of projects with GBV as the main objective increased from 7 per cent in 2022 to 10 per cent in 2023. The large number of projects with GBV as a project component reflects the continued centrality of protection from and response to GBV in CERF-funded interventions.

In some instances, CERF-supported projects also contribute to addressing the root causes of GBV, thereby laying the foundations for longer-term impact. In Uganda, for instance, a \$6.5 million allocation from CERF’s UFE window supported UN Women, amongst others, in engaging with men and boys to challenge negative social norms, strengthening referral mechanisms, and sensitizing community structures and local service providers to prevent and respond effectively to GBV in both refugee and host communities.

GBV ASSESSMENT IN CERF FUNDED PROJECTS



*Common services such as humanitarian air services or logistics have been excluded from the analysis because they do not engage with affected people in need.



Protecting women and girls affected by the conflict in Sudan

Gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) were pressing issues for women and girls in Sudan even before the conflict began in April 2023. By early 2023, the Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) estimated that 3.1 million women, girls, and other vulnerable populations were exposed to GBV. As clashes erupted, access to GBV prevention and response services significantly declined due to ongoing fighting, alongside the destruction and looting of healthcare facilities, leaving more women and girls at risk of violence, both within and outside Sudan.

Through an \$18 million allocation from the UFE window, which was reprioritized in response to the new conflict, CERF provided crucial funding to address urgent needs across sectors, including enabling UNFPA to deliver timely, integrated, and survivor-based services to combat GBV across the states of Khartoum, Aj Jazirah, White Nile, and Blue Nile. Subsequently, two additional CERF RR allocations of \$22 million and \$20 million, respectively, supported UN agencies in scaling up the response, allowing UNFPA to expand critical GBV services to other areas across the country.

These CERF-funded projects facilitated the distribution of 27,418 dignity kits to help women and girls maintain proper hygiene, the establishment of 10 temporary Women and Girls Safe Spaces, and the creation of 10 community-based protection networks to enhance GBV programs and facilitate survivors' access to case management, clinical treatment for rape, and psychosocial support services. UNFPA collaborated with national NGOs and supported local women-led organizations and community structures to ensure accessibility to these services, despite humanitarian access constraints.

South Sudan. Women embrace at a displacement site. Thanks to CERF, UNFPA has established woman-friendly safe spaces so that those affected by the Sudan conflict can access protection activities and train in livelihoods skills. In 2023, CERF provided \$106M to assist millions affected by the crisis, both inside Sudan and in neighboring countries.

Photo: OCHA/Alioune Ndiaye

People assisted



Sudan. Children in Sennar state play with sorghum. CERF, Sudan Humanitarian Fund and other donors supported an FAO emergency seed distribution, July to September 2023, to bolster food security. Photo: FAO/Khalid Ali

People assisted

As humanitarian needs skyrocketed in 2023, CERF enabled partners to deliver critical humanitarian assistance to an estimated 32.8 million people in 40 countries. Some 42 per cent of all people assisted by CERF (\$13.9 million) were affected by climate-related shocks and other natural disasters – the highest proportion in CERF’s history. In 2023, the Fund further sharpened its focus on helping the humanitarian community assist those most at risk during emergencies, including – but not limited to – women, girls, children, people with disabilities, and the forcibly displaced.

Throughout 2023, CERF enabled fast and predictable life-saving assistance and protection to 32.8 million people in 40 countries across the world.

Sudan was the country with the largest number of people assisted through CERF funding – a total of 4.6 million people – due to the large-scale response to the conflict that broke out in April 2023 and the ensuing forced displacement. CERF funding also helped to assist Sudanese refugees, returnees and host communities in neighbouring countries, namely Chad (338,000), South Sudan (331,000), Egypt (320,000), Ethiopia (117,300) and the Central African Republic (39,800). Ethiopia was the country with the second highest number of people assisted (3.1 million), with CERF enabling responses to multiple emergencies, from the Sudanese refugee crisis to droughts and floods. This was followed by Syria, with 2.1 million people assisted, mostly through the CERF-funded response to the earthquake along the Syria-Türkiye border.



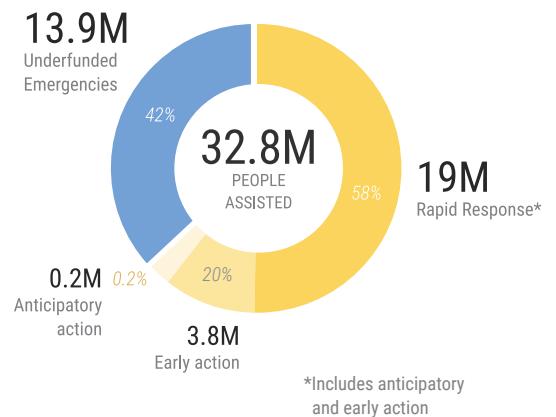
The United Kingdom is a proud supporter of CERF, a life-saving fund which we helped set up and is at the forefront of global humanitarian response, pioneering new and innovative initiatives to save lives and reduce human suffering.

Since CERF’s inception, we remain the largest overall donor, contributing more than \$1.8bn to the fund since 2006. CERF played an invaluable role in 2023 in responding to forgotten and underfunded crises and was central to global humanitarian efforts – including rapid response in Sudan and drought and displacement in Ethiopia. The CERF continues to play a key role in anticipatory action allowing humanitarian actors to undertake preparedness activities and offer long-term solutions.

Andrew Mitchell, Minister for Development, United Kingdom

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH 2023 CERF FUNDING

By window



PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH 2023 CERF FUNDING

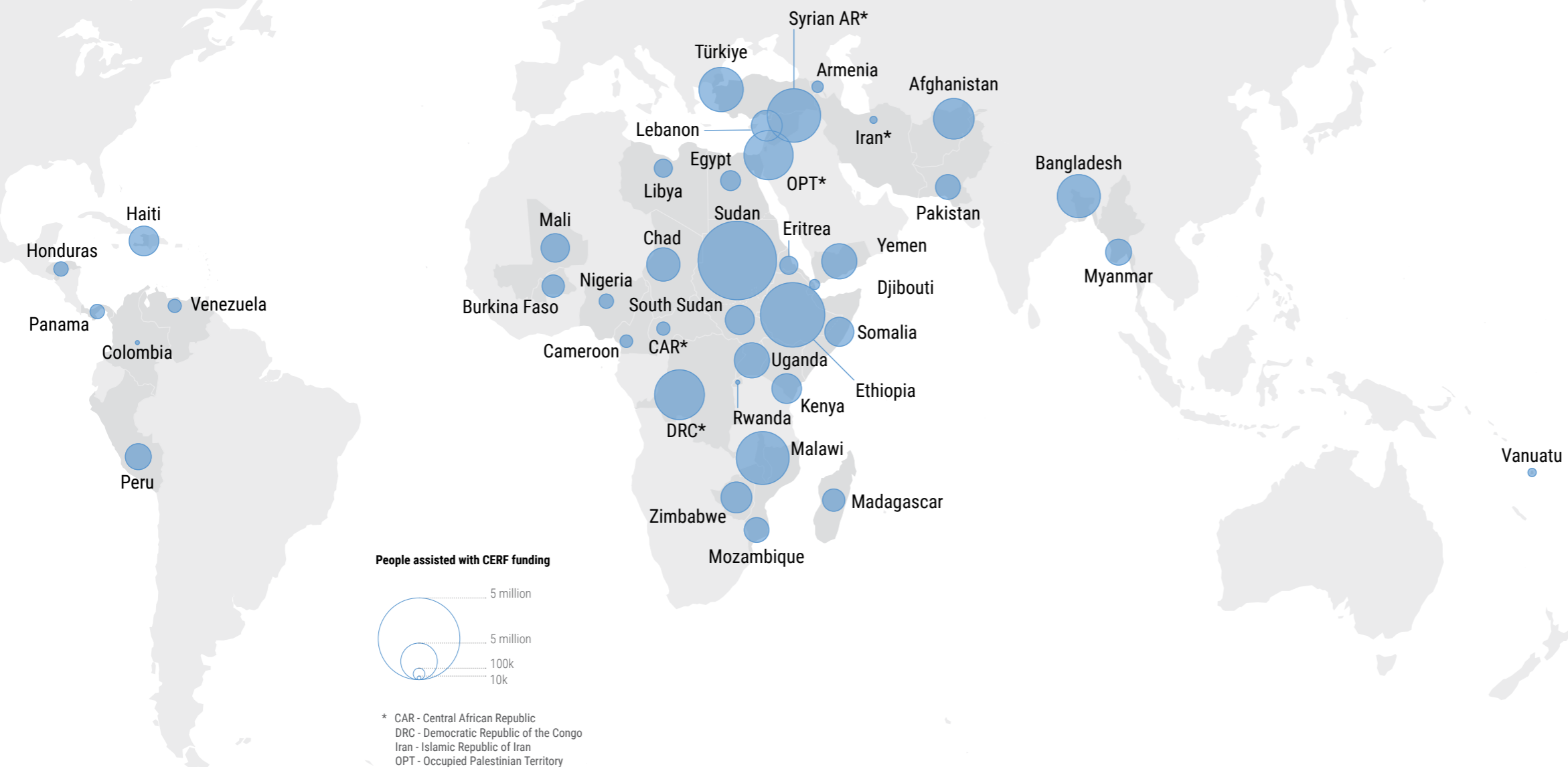


32.8M

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH CERF FUNDING IN

40

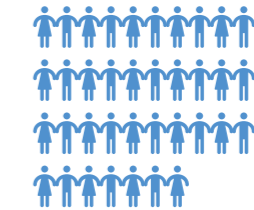
COUNTRIES



* CAR - Central African Republic
 DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo
 Iran - Islamic Republic of Iran
 OPT - Occupied Palestinian Territory
 Syria AR - Syrian Arab Republic

TOP TEN COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH CERF FUNDING

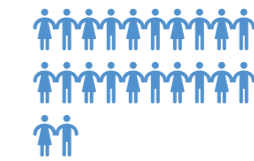
Sudan 4.7M people



Ethiopia 3.2M



Syrian AR* 2.2M



Malawi 2.1M



DRC* 1.9M



OPT 1.9M



Türkiye 1.5M



Bangladesh 1.4M



Afghanistan 1.3M



Uganda 1.0M

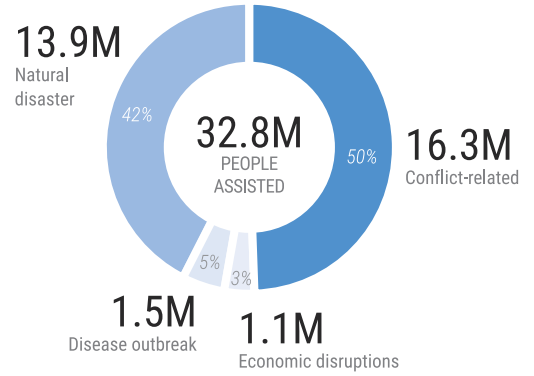


Responding to priority needs across crises

Half (16.3 million) of the people who received life-saving assistance through CERF funding in 2023 were reached through allocations in response to humanitarian needs driven by conflicts. A record 43 per cent of people assisted (13.9 million) were affected by natural disasters, most of whom (10 million) were affected by climate-related emergencies – i.e., droughts, floods, storms and cold waves. Approximately 1.5 million people were assisted through CERF-funded action to tackle disease outbreaks and at least 755,000 received treatment for cholera and other forms of acute watery diarrhoea, while over 1 million people received CERF-funded support in response to the humanitarian consequences of economic crises (see page 34).

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH 2023 CERF FUNDING

By main driver of humanitarian need



People assisted with 2023 CERF funding following climate-related shocks

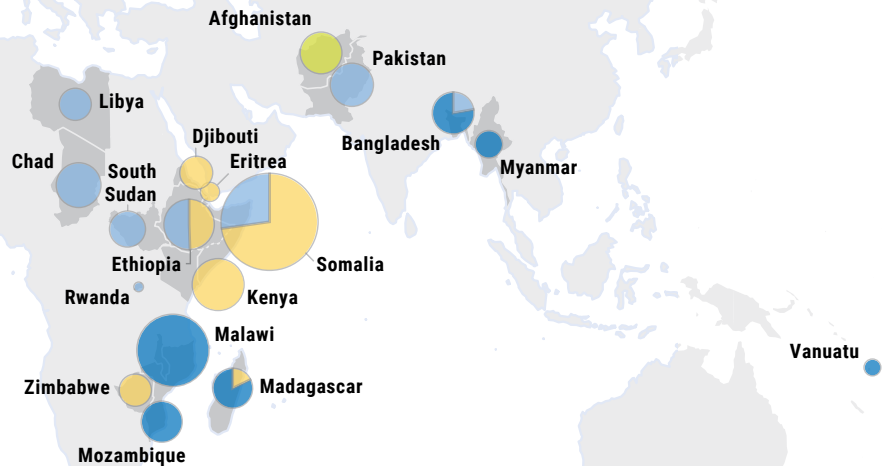
CERF is a leading global humanitarian funding tool for responding to climate-related humanitarian emergencies. In 2023, CERF funding helped assist 10 million people, over half of whom were women and girls, in 19 countries affected by climate-related disasters. This accounts for 30 per cent of the total number of people assisted thanks to CERF funding during the year.

This was largely driven by humanitarian responses to climate-induced disasters in the Horn of Africa, which experienced a three-year drought linked to the influence of La Niña, followed by heavy rains and flooding induced by El Niño – both part of a natural cycle whose effects have become more pronounced in recent years due to climate change. Ethiopia was the country with the highest number of people assisted by CERF in response to climate-related disasters, namely droughts (1.8 million people assisted) and floods (over 680,000 people assisted), followed by Kenya (702,000 people assisted through CERF-funded response to drought) and Somalia (665,000 people impacted by floods and drought).

Emergency type



Peru



Consistent with previous years, the health sector accounted for the largest number of beneficiaries of CERF-funded assistance (17.4 million people).

With CERF support, UN agencies and partners were able to respond to acute health emergencies and maintain essential health services in crisis settings – including, but not limited to, life-saving curative services, maternal and newborn care, immunization, sexual and reproductive health, and psychosocial support – reaching those who needed it the most. This includes at least 131,000 people who received vaccinations thanks to WHO and its partners, and more than 639,000 people who received mental health and psychosocial support services. Moreover, at least 283,000 health kits were delivered to health facilities, benefiting countless others.

Life-saving support through the health sector was crucial for responses across all emergency types.

CERF funding enabled health assistance for approximately 8 million people in response to conflict-driven emergencies and natural disasters, and over 1 million in response to disease outbreaks. Approximately 204,600 people severely affected by economic crises also received CERF-supported assistance through the health sector.

This was followed by the WASH and food security sectors, which provided CERF-funded assistance to 9.9 million and 7.6 million people, respectively.

This included at least 3 million people receiving critical WASH kits and at least 1 million people benefiting from agricultural inputs.

Reaching the most vulnerable

Throughout the year, CERF continued to prioritize life-saving support for the most vulnerable, including women, children and people with disabilities.

In 2023, 18.4 million people assisted with CERF funding (56 per cent of the total) were women and girls, and 16.3 million (nearly half) were children under the age of 18. This represents an increase compared to 2022 levels, when CERF assisted approximately 17 million women and girls (53 per cent of the total number of people assisted that year).

CERF-funded assistance in the health and protection sectors had a particularly strong focus on women and girls.

This included the delivery of critical specialized assistance to over 1.8 million women and girls, including specialized services for at least 616,000 gender-based violence (GBV) survivors.

For instance, in Haiti, CERF funding has enabled UNFPA to conduct key initiatives, such as deploying mobile GBV teams, orienting healthcare providers on essential services like clinical management of rape, and establishing safe spaces for GBV case management and psychosocial support. Additionally, CERF funding has enabled the provision of health insurance cards to over 1,250 GBV survivors, facilitating continued access to healthcare services by covering the cost of medical consultations, clinical laboratory tests and medications.



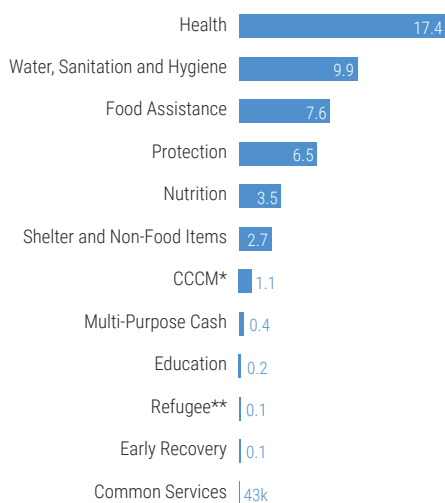
The CERF’s proven ability to provide rapid and flexible assistance means that it is routinely the first source of funding following sudden crises. CERF also provides much-needed resources to underfunded areas, providing critical support to address urgent humanitarian needs, particularly for women and girls.

Ahmed Hussien, Minister of International Development, Canada

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH 2023 CERF FUNDING

By sector

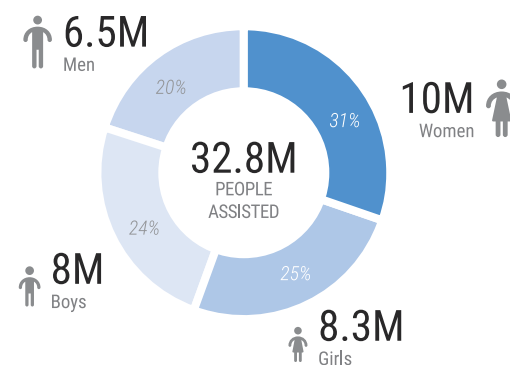
in million



*Camp Coordination and Management
**Multi-sector Refugee Assistance

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH 2023 CERF FUNDING

By sex and age





Colombia. Yasselly meets a young resident in remote Chocó department of northwestern Colombia. Photo: UNHCR/Nicolo Filippo Rosso

Women working on the frontline of protection

Chocó, Colombia. Yasselly works as a ‘personera’, a municipal ombudsperson who helps ensure people’s human rights are respected. It can be dangerous work. “I received threats for doing the kind of work we do, and I know that many of my colleagues have also been threatened.”

Non-state armed groups are responsible for the increase in violence in the Pacific Coast region of Colombia, which has made indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities more vulnerable. The violence has restricted mobility, limited access to essential goods and services, and prevented livelihood activities and the practice of cultural customs.

In an effort to guide and improve the humanitarian response, in 2023 CERF allocated \$6.5 million to fund programmes to strengthen community engagement and consultation, in line with the Flagship Initiative. This funding aimed to provide communities that are at risk of or have faced violence with protection support, counselling, safe places for women, education on landmines, and improved farming techniques to ensure adequate food supplies.

CERF funding to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, helped strengthen the community-based protection response, providing, among other things, workshops on human rights, protection assistance and referrals, as well as access to community ombudspersons – like Yasselly.

The ongoing violence means that Yasselly is regularly called upon to grapple with situations such as ‘confinements’, a devastating practice where armed groups lock down entire villages, warning residents not to leave under threat of death or violence. Yasselly helps by ensuring, for example, that schoolteachers can safely access confined communities. She also helps people report landmines to the authorities in charge of removing them.

With CERF support, UNHCR is helping Yasselly and other personeros by donating equipment they need to do their jobs, as well as much-needed aid to the communities they serve. The project also supports field protection monitoring, increased advocacy, and documentation and reporting on confinements, internal displacement and other rights violations, as well as the rehabilitation of community emergency shelters.

While the longevity and scope of the conflict in Chocó mean that inhabitants’ needs far outstrip the capacity of personeras to respond, Yasselly says she takes great satisfaction in the help she can provide. “We aren’t going to resolve the problems because they are structural, but we do our part so that communities that find themselves in these situations get timely help and, in the midst of so many difficulties, some hope.”

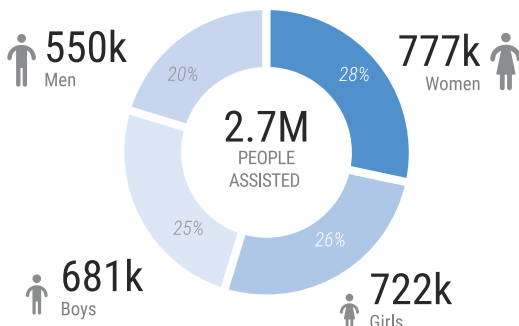


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**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ASSISTED
WITH 2023 CERF FUNDING**

By sex and age



CERF also supported the sexual and reproductive health of the most vulnerable. With CERF funding, UN agencies and partners ensured that at least 910,000 people, most of them women and girls, benefited from sexual and reproductive health services across 30 countries. CERF-funded interventions also ensured that at least 96,000 children were born in the presence of skilled health personnel.

The protection of people caught in humanitarian crises remained an integral part of CERF-funded responses in 2023. During the year, the Fund supported dedicated protection projects assisting some 6.5 million people – 25 per cent more than the previous year (5.2 million). Almost 40 per cent of them benefited from GBV protection and prevention services, while more than 2.9 million children were assisted with protection interventions – a 30 per cent increase compared to 2022 levels.

In 2023, an estimated 2.7 million people with disabilities benefited from CERF-funded humanitarian assistance, including some 777,400 women and 1.4 million children. Currently, an estimated 1.3 billion people – or 16 per cent of the global population – are living with a disability, with a higher prevalence in developing countries. People living with disabilities are disproportionately affected by conflict and humanitarian emergencies and are often among those most in need of assistance as they are at heightened risk of violence, exploitation or abuse. In 2023, CERF funding enabled assistance for 1.4 million people with disabilities in conflict situations, which included over 355,000 people in Sudan, over 215,000 in the DRC and nearly 115,000 people in Bangladesh. In addition, over a million people living with disabilities benefited from CERF-funded responses to natural disasters, including climate-related emergencies (especially droughts and floods).



Through our annual contribution to CERF, Qatar Fund for Development stands firm in our commitment to humanitarian assistance. Together with OCHA, we are dedicated to fostering resilience and providing support to existing and underfunded emergencies, reflecting our shared commitment to leave no one behind.

HE Mr. Khalifa Jassim Al Kuwari
Director General
Qatar Fund for Development

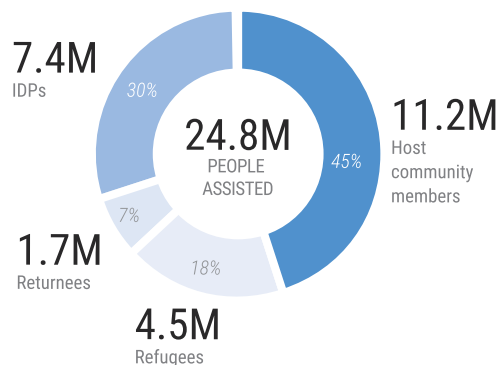
Providing a lifeline to people affected by displacement

In 2023, addressing the devastating humanitarian consequences of population displacement remained a critical part of CERF-funded assistance. In 2023, three quarters (or 24.8 million) of people assisted by CERF were affected by forced displacement – the highest number in the history of the Fund. Of these, 7.4 million were internally displaced people (IDPs), 4.5 million were refugees, 1.7 million were returnees and 11.2 million were people from host communities.

The majority of displaced people supported by CERF were in need of assistance due to conflict, most notably in Sudan and neighbouring countries. At the same time, CERF-supported responses to natural disasters provided assistance to over 4 million IDPs, refugees and returnees. CERF also provided several allocations in 2023 focusing specifically on addressing the humanitarian consequences of population displacement, as seen in the DRC and Yemen.

2023 CERF-FUNDED ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

By type





Ethiopia. Halima with her children in Bul'ad camp, Hargele, Somali region. Photo: UNICEF/Ayene

Supporting children living with disabilities in emergencies

Hargele, Ethiopia. After losing many of their cattle to the drought, Lina's family left the village of Hulul to seek help. They eventually settled in a makeshift shelter in Bul'ad camp, in Ethiopia's Hargele region. Almost a year after they arrived, the family are still struggling.

Five consecutive seasons of failed rainfall have pushed families in the Horn of Africa, including the Somali region of Ethiopia, into crisis. Out of desperation, thousands have left their homes in search of water, food, pasture and treatment for sick children.

Each day, Lina's father tries to find work in town as a day labourer. Her mother, Halima, takes care of Lina and her brother, both of whom have developmental disabilities. "I am not like the other parents here. I have two children with disabilities. Mohammed is six and still unable to speak. And if I left Lina by herself, she could wander around and get hurt," Halima explains.

In humanitarian emergencies, the needs of children with disabilities are often overlooked as schools and healthcare facilities that are already overwhelmed struggle to provide services to everyone in need. Without support, families with children with disabilities can be less equipped to cope with the challenging conditions.

In 2023, CERF enabled UN agencies and partners to assist 1.4 million children living with disabilities through mainstreamed support across its allocations.

To support Lina's family and others, UNICEF includes a 'disability top-up' in cash transfers, funded by CERF and other donors. This helps families address some of the additional needs. "What we are providing here is cash support to help families improve their nutritional status. They must have options to buy essentials depending on their need," says Utpal Moitra, Chief of the UNICEF office in Ethiopia.

Halima used the extra cash to buy epilepsy medication for Lina. It was a small step towards making life here more secure.



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Chad. I am Malaaz. I'm 14 and from Sudan. I have been living in Farchana refugee camp with my grandmother and my aunt for five months.
Credit: UNICEF/Aye-ake

Child-friendly space for displaced children

Farchana camp, Chad. Before war broke out, Malaaz lived in El Geneina, in Sudan. “I could eat whenever I wanted, and I could eat the food I like. I can’t do that here,” she explains.

Since April 2023, 8.1 million people have been displaced inside and outside of Sudan. About half a million have fled to Chad – among them, Malaaz and her family.

When hostilities broke out, CERF provided support to UN agencies and partners for life-saving humanitarian action in Sudan and neighbouring countries. This included a \$14 million allocation to Chad to help Sudanese refugees like Malaaz.

Malaaz and her family fled to Farchana camp in Chad, where she now lives with her grandmother and aunt. Here, Malaaz has access to a child-friendly space that UNICEF established with CERF funding. “We have games in this place,” she says. “Every morning from 8 to 11 the children come here.” The space is open to different age groups at different times of day. “We model with clay, and we draw.”

The children play sports too. “We play volleyball and soccer,” says Malaaz. “I’m a great volleyball player – better than the UNICEF man who is in charge of the space. Every time he comes, he plays with us. But he’s not much of a player.”

The child-friendly space provides a much-needed reprieve, and is important for children’s mental health following the traumatic events they experienced. Here, children can also access specialized psychological support if they need it, and there are also activities for teenagers and parents.

CERF funding enabled UNICEF, in partnership with the Chadian Red Cross, to provide access to spaces like this for over 2,000 refugee children.



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Methodology for calculating numbers of people assisted

CERF uses the number of people targeted as a proxy for the number of people assisted. This approach allows for timely global reporting as the final data on people reached with CERF funding only becomes available when CERF-funded projects are fully implemented and reported on. Using the data on people targeted as a proxy for people assisted is justified by an analysis covering the last four years, which demonstrates that CERF consistently reaches significantly more people than it targets. CERF will continue to monitor the data on people targeted and reached to ensure the validity of this approach.

CERF applies a consistent methodology for tracking the number of people targeted and reached. CERF requires all recipient agencies to provide detailed information on the number of people directly targeted and reached with each CERF-funded project. The multisectoral nature of CERF-funded assistance means that people may receive CERF-funded life-saving assistance through several different sectors. To avoid the risk of double-counting, CERF uses a two-step methodology to calculate the total number of people assisted through an allocation. First, sector leads, in consultation with implementing agencies, identify areas of duplication within sectors. Second, OCHA field offices or Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) offices identify duplications between sectors within the same CERF allocation.



Rwanda. People carry bean seeds for future planting. In May 2023 Rwanda experienced devastating floods and landslides. With CERF support, FAO helped people rebuild their livelihoods
Photo: FAO

Catalysing innovation and positive change



Nigeria. Women engaged in Tom Brown cooking class. Tom Brown is not a person, but a healthy local porridge. Emergency agricultural interventions to fight food crises were implemented by FAO with funding from CERF.

Photo: FAO/Giulia AnichiniViollet

Catalysing innovation and positive change

Beyond funding humanitarian programmes delivering life-saving assistance for millions of people, CERF allocations can be strategically leveraged to promote positive change and strengthen the humanitarian response. In 2023, CERF continued to scale up anticipatory and early action allocations, reinforced efforts to support localization of aid, and furthered its commitment to leave no-one behind through inclusive programming and strengthening Accountability to Affected People.

To keep up with soaring needs and operational costs, the humanitarian sector requires system-wide changes, including added efficiencies through new innovations and improved processes. Although CERF represents a relatively small portion of global humanitarian funding requirements, the Fund continues to play an important role in catalysing a more effective and efficient humanitarian response by promoting best practices, fostering innovation and systematically capturing learning for the benefit of the wider humanitarian system.



In 2023, CERF continued to demonstrate its crucial role in providing life-saving assistance and alleviating the acute suffering of millions of people in Sudan, Afghanistan, DR Congo, among others. With the recent launch of the Climate Action Account of CERF, I believe the fund will be able to enhance its effectiveness in responding to climate change that frequently intersect with ongoing crises. The Republic of Korea, a long-standing partner of CERF, will continue to stand firmly behind OCHA's efforts.

*Cho Tae-yul, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Korea*

Anticipatory and early action

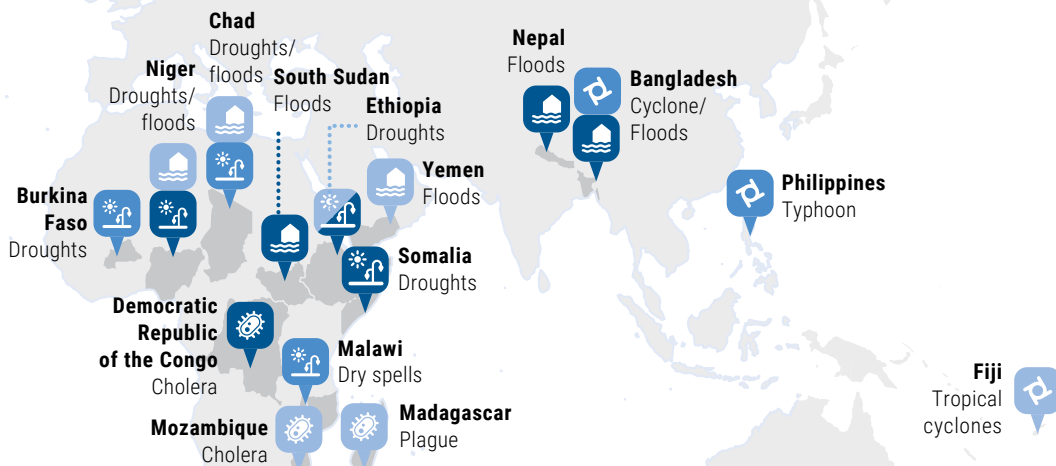
By making early and more 'forward-leaning' allocations and facilitating anticipatory action (AA) frameworks, CERF enables partners to get ahead of predictable hazards, thereby ensuring a more efficient, effective and dignified humanitarian response.

Beyond CERF's more traditional funding functions in response to sudden onset and protracted crises, the Fund is increasingly ready to act on forecasts and projections, and provide 'no-regrets' funding quickly, even when information is uncertain or incomplete.

In 2023, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) reaffirmed that AA is a core function of CERF, and OCHA continued the roll-out of AA frameworks. During the year, the ERC endorsed two new frameworks in Bangladesh and Fiji for tropical cyclones and agreed to continue CERF support for improved frameworks in Bangladesh and Nepal for floods, in the Philippines for storms, and in Niger for droughts. In addition, new frameworks or expansions are under development in Chad, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Niger, Mozambique and Yemen. Consequently, by the end of 2023, the amount of pre-committed CERF financing for AA frameworks had increased by 48 per cent since 2022 - from \$66.2 million to \$98.3 million.

**CERF ANTICIPATORY
ACTION PORTFOLIO
2023**

El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Nicaragua
Droughts



CERF collaborates with a wide range of partners to set up coordinated frameworks for AA. Each AA framework consists of four core components that enable predictable and rapid action ahead of crises: (1) a robust forecasting mechanism linked to a clear decision-making process; (2) pre-agreed activities; (3) pre-arranged funds that can be released to immediately initiate time-critical activities; and (4) dedicated learning activities to systematically capture evidence from these initiatives.

Since 2019, CERF has facilitated and coordinated multi-actor AA for drought, floods, storms and disease outbreaks in over 19 countries.*

Framework
● Activated
● Endorsed
● In development

* This figure includes initial discussions around anticipatory action in Nigeria and Haiti.

In 2023, only one framework was triggered. CERF released \$750,000 for AA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for cholera in July 2023, following an earlier activation of the framework at the end of 2022 (see page 31). As of December 2023, nine ERC-endorsed frameworks were operational (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, the DRC, Fiji, Nepal, Niger, the Philippines), ready to be activated if the pre-agreed triggers are reached, with a total of \$73 million in pre-arranged funding. These frameworks – which could be triggered at any moment – can enable life-saving anticipatory action for up to 2.6 million people across eight countries.

As well as supporting formal AA frameworks, CERF continues to be forward leaning by increasingly allocating funding for early action, based on forecasts and other global analyses, to ensure that people exposed to crises receive assistance as early as possible. In 2023, CERF provided \$124 million for early action to get ahead of rising food insecurity (see page 43), disease outbreaks, flooding and drought, including events driven by El Niño – assisting approximately 3.8 million people.



Madagascar. Children play on a rainwater catchment tank in Ampotaka village. UNICEF built an underwater aquifer here, with CERF support. Photo: UNICEF/Prinsloo

Enhancing the timeliness and impact of the El Niño response

In recent years, a number of regions in Zimbabwe and Madagascar have reported below-average rainfall levels. El Niño is expected to exacerbate these conditions and severely disrupt food production, nutrition, education and WASH in many provinces – as predicted by multiple extreme weather warnings and seasonal forecasting.

In December 2023, in response to the projected El Niño-induced deterioration in drought conditions, the ERC allocated \$4 million each to Zimbabwe and Madagascar from CERF’s Rapid Response (RR) window, to commence immediate anticipatory and early response activities. This funding enabled UN agencies and partners to provide life-saving assistance to 330,000 people across the two countries, through timely actions in the food security and livelihoods, health, nutrition, protection and WASH sectors.



Taking advantage of extreme weather warnings and seasonal forecasting, CERF was able to enhance the timeliness and impact of responses by making allocations at opportune moments along the crisis timeline. By supporting timely multi-sectoral and multi-agency actions, these early CERF allocations contributed to a more harmonized and holistic approach, enabling humanitarian actors to get ‘ahead of the crisis’, thereby preventing loss of life, stemming disease outbreaks, and averting an increase in food insecurity.



Localization

In line with the Grand Bargain commitments, supporting the localization of aid remains a priority for CERF. Although CERF can only directly fund UN agencies – in line with its General Assembly mandate – it still plays an important role in enabling humanitarian action by local and national actors. Under the leadership of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs), CERF allocation strategies are jointly developed by UN agencies and NGOs through their participation in Humanitarian Country Teams and cluster or sector structures. CERF funding is then implemented through partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs, host governments and Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, helping to support localized responses and expand the reach of CERF-funded humanitarian action.

In 2023, CERF continued efforts to promote localization, building on the results of allocations through the 2022 Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) rounds. In the two 2023 UFE rounds, the ERC encouraged UN country teams to consult with national and local partners on the design and prioritization of CERF funding, and to strengthen their engagement in the implementation of grants. The RC/HCs were also invited to set ambitious targets – based on the local context – for the amount of CERF funding to be sub-granted to national and local implementing partners. As a result, about a quarter of the 2023 UFE allocations was sub-granted to national and local organizations.⁶

⁶ Sub-grants data are extracted from CERF applications and should be considered as estimates only, as the breakdown of sub-grants by partner type is not always available at the time of the disbursement of CERF funds. The information on sub-grants in this report will be updated as the final grant reports become available, in the CERF Annual Results Report for 2024.



\$275.7M

Total allocations from 2023 UFE Rounds



\$69M

Sub-granted to national and local partners

25%

Of total UFE allocations in 2023

In focus: Partnerships and localization

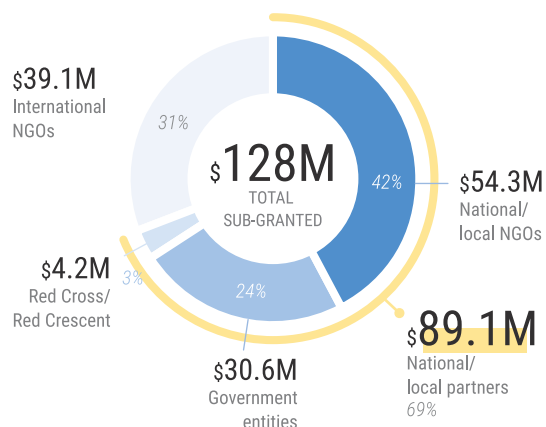
In 2022, UN agencies sub-granted \$128.3 million of 2022 CERF funding to 732 implementing partners*, which included 369 national and local NGOs, 113 international NGOs, 232 government entities and 18 Red Cross/Red Crescent societies. National and local NGOs represented half of the implementing partners. The sub-granted funding constituted over 20 per cent of 2022 CERF allocations, of which \$54.3 million went to national and local NGOs, or 42 per cent. Funding to national and local NGOs made up nearly 10 per cent of the total 2022 CERF funding.

By including host governments and national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, the share of CERF funds sub-granted to national and local partners increases to 69 per cent of the total amount of sub-granted funding, compared to 66 per cent in 2021. This represents 15 per cent of the total 2022 CERF funding.

* As of March 2023, 81% of 2022 CERF RC/HCs reports have been finalized, which cover total CERF allocations of \$523.6 million. The sub-grants information in this report will be updated on a rolling basis as the remaining reports become available.

SUB-GRANTED 2022 CERF FUNDING

in US\$



Advancing inclusive programming

CERF continues to take the lead in fostering inclusive humanitarian action, placing the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized at the very heart of the response. To this end, UN recipient agencies and their implementing partners are encouraged “to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people they seek to assist”.⁷ CERF advances Accountability to Affected People in humanitarian action by assessing that all elements on Accountability to Affected People are adequately reflected in the design of CERF-funded projects. CERF requires applicant organizations to demonstrate that diverse groups of beneficiaries are directly consulted on project development and involved in project implementation and monitoring. CERF also expects agencies to have confidential and fully accessible beneficiary feedback mechanisms, with assurances that they will follow up on feedback received and inform beneficiaries of corrective actions taken. In addition, CERF promotes the use of collective mechanisms for Accountability to Affected People, as part of the humanitarian response architecture or at the national level.

In 2023, CERF further promoted Accountability to Affected People with a dedicated funding envelope of nearly \$5 million under the second UFE round of the year. By supporting targeted initiatives to launch or enhance collective Accountability to Affected People practices in 10 humanitarian operations (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Mozambique, Myanmar, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Uganda and Venezuela), the allocations aim to promote sustainable, response-wide initiatives that empower affected demographics, especially women, girls and young people, to effectively participate in humanitarian decision-making processes.

Funding from this dedicated envelope helps empower communities to participate in decision-making processes and determine their own priorities. For instance, CERF funding is supporting a project piloting community-based feedback mechanisms in targeted municipalities in Venezuela, with the aim of ensuring that affected communities – including women, men, youth, the elderly, people living with disabilities and LGBTQI+ people – participate in decisions that concern them. The initiative involves various forms

of community participation such as focus group discussions, community-based assessments, and the development of community action plans. Together with humanitarian partners, affected populations conduct joint analyses throughout the various phases of the project lifecycle, including design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

In recent years, CERF has strengthened its guidance and analysis on gender, disability and gender-based violence (GBV). Gender, GBV and disability considerations are mainstreamed in all stages of the CERF programme cycle, from strategy formulation, proposal development, application reviews and funding decisions, through to monitoring, reporting and evaluations. To inform targeted interventions and mainstreamed support for the most at-risk groups, CERF has also improved data collection across all its funding. CERF collects sex- and age-disaggregated data on beneficiaries of all CERF-funded projects. The Fund requires recipient agencies to be guided by the Gender with Age Marker (GAM) when developing project proposals and to include GBV and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) assessments. Similarly, CERF-funded projects also collect information on the disability status of beneficiaries.

CERF allocations also play a crucial role in enhancing the capacities of local responders and communities in addressing GBV and PSEA. For instance, when Madagascar received a \$9 million CERF allocation in response to cyclones Batsirai and Emnati, part of the funds was dedicated to community-level awareness activities on preventing and managing GBV and PSEA. Individuals supported through CERF funding served as relays in their communities, sharing essential information about child protection, GBV and PSEA. Another example is seen in UNFPA's activities in Malawi as part of the CERF-funded cholera response. Leveraging on its co-lead role of the GBV sub-cluster, the agency conducted trainings and raised awareness among frontline emergency workers on GBV and PSEA and management standards to strengthen coordination of GBV service provision. Further, thanks to CERF funding, UNFPA strengthened existing monitoring and GBV referral mechanisms and disseminated key information to the communities and at cholera treatment centers.

⁷ [IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)

In focus: Cash and voucher assistance in CERF-funded projects

In 2023, CERF enabled the transfer of \$97.6 million in cash and voucher assistance (CVA) to 4 million people in 33 countries, providing a more flexible and dignified form of assistance that lets people make their own choices.* Nearly a quarter of this amount, or \$23.8 million, was granted as CVA from CERF's famine prevention allocation (see page 43), assisting more than half a million people. Some 83 per cent of the overall CVA amount** was transferred in the form of cash assistance: \$37.5 million as sector-specific cash assistance, \$30.4 million for unconditional multi-purpose cash assistance, and \$12.1 million in conditional cash assistance. The remaining \$16.8 million, or 17 per cent, was transferred as vouchers.***

Several agencies increased their use of CERF-funded CVA. WFP was the largest implementer of CERF-funded CVA projects (delivering \$50.4 million in CVA, or 32 per cent of the total amount received), followed by IOM (\$15.5 million, or 21 per cent). WFP alone, assisted nearly 3 million people with CVA transfers in 2023. FAO was the third largest implementer, providing nearly 18 per cent of received CERF funding in 2023 (\$10.4 million) as CVA to crises-affected people, up from 13 per cent (\$8.6 million) in 2022.

* This refers to the actual amount of cash and voucher assistance that targeted people receive, and does not include delivery costs such as staffing, monitoring and financial service providers' transfer fees. Total CVA programming therefore constitutes an even larger portion of CERF funding.

** At the time of report writing, 99% of the overall 2023 CVA amount was provided with a breakdown by CVA type, amounting to \$96.8 million.

***CERF relies on the CALP network's definitions for CVA; CERF further distinguishes between two types of unconditional cash assistance: (i) multi-purpose cash, which are transfers (either periodic or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money required to cover, fully or partially, a household's basic needs for multiple sectors and (ii) sector-specific cash transfers (either periodic or one-off), which correspond to the amount of money required to cover, fully or partially, a household's basic needs within a single sector (e.g. shelter).



\$97.6M

Transferred to people in need in the form of CVA

15%

Of total CERF funding transferred to affected people as CVA



38%

Of all CERF-funded projects included CVA



33

Countries benefited from CVA through CERF grants



4.5M

People assisted through CVA



The DRC. Amida and her family rely on food assistance to survive. They fled violence in their village and sought safety at Rusayo camp, outside Goma town. Photo: WFP/Benjamin Anguandia.

Cash assistance to buy food and other essentials

North Kivu, the DRC. The emergency in the DRC is one of the most complex crises globally. Clashes between armed groups have created unprecedented need and forced millions to flee their homes.

“We need water to prepare food, so when there’s a shortage, the family can’t eat,” explains Frediana, who lives at the Bushagara camp on the outskirts of Goma in the eastern region of the DRC.

In 2023, CERF allocated over \$45 million to boost the capacity of UN agencies to respond to the crisis in the east of the country. With CERF support, UNICEF, in partnership with the Congolese organization, YME Grands Lacs, constructed water stations, as well as new latrines and showers, in the camp where Frediana lives. The funding supported access to safe water and sanitation for 108,000 people living in displacement.

Like Frediana and many others, Christine and her six children fled their village following an increase in the fighting. They found refuge in another camp, Rusayo, just outside of Goma. Christine relies on cash assistance to buy food, medicine and the essentials her children need.

Cash is a critical part of the emergency response. Through WFP, CERF funding supported the distribution of cash assistance worth \$1.7 million.

“In DRC, where we face many challenges of insecurity, hampered access and poor infrastructure, this approach allows us to respond quickly and effectively, but also contributes to the resilience and recovery of local economies fostered by sustainable development in the long run,” explains Azzurra Chiarini, WFP Head of Programme in the DRC.

“Things are good at the site – people are living in harmony. But we are just waiting for the war to finish so we can go home,” says Frediana.



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Improving coherence between funding instruments

At the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, OCHA committed to supporting the ‘new way of working’, which places a greater emphasis on helping strengthen collaboration with development and – where appropriate – peacebuilding actors. As part of this commitment, OCHA seeks to ensure that its Pooled Funds promote a more coordinated and complementary use of humanitarian resources alongside those of the development and peacebuilding sectors.

While CERF remains inherently humanitarian and focused on principled, life-saving responses, it is well-positioned to promote coordination and informal cooperation with other sectors. Its speed and agility mean that CERF is often one of the first actors on the ground that is capable of providing seed funding, initiating policy dialogues, facilitating the exchange of information and analysis, and encouraging coherent engagement and common approaches among partners.

Looking forward, CERF will remain engaged in identifying further opportunities to support collaboration across the nexus to help advance long-term solutions for crisis-affected people, including through climate financing. CERF’s newly established Climate Action Account (see page 40) will work in complementarity with existing climate financing channels, by offering a quick, efficient and impactful avenue for employing climate finance to assist people in fragile



As people in need deserve assistance quickly, we staunchly support CERF. CERF’s swift allocation capacity helps kick-start and scale up responses that benefit the most vulnerable. Through this, and with a focus on innovation, the importance of local actors and smart complementarity of pooled funds, CERF combines quality funding with quality coordination and quality partnership.

*[Nathalie Olijslager](#)
[Director, Stabilisation & Humanitarian Action,](#)
[Ministry of Foreign Affairs,](#)
[The Netherland](#)*

and conflict-affected settings – which are often the least likely to receive financing geared towards adapting and recovering from the impact of climate change. By enabling donors to directly contribute to early and anticipatory action and humanitarian responses to climate-related disasters, CERF-supported projects will help enhance the resilience of crisis-affected communities to climate shocks, and build stronger synergies between relief, recovery and long-term development efforts.



Yemen. Beneficiaries while distributing animal feed at Alrwa'a Center in Dhubab district, Taizz governorate. Photo: FAO/Gabreez



Leveraging complementarity with the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement in Yemen

Yemen is one of the 15 countries selected by the UN system to pilot 'solutions pathways' as part of the UN commitments in the [Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#). These aim to ensure adequate synergy between humanitarian and development actors in an effort to develop durable solutions to displacement.

To this effect, a Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG) was established in 2023, working closely with the Resident Coordinator Office across humanitarian and development initiatives. The DSWG has worked with the UNCT in Yemen on a proposal to the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF), which supports joint initiatives addressing internal displacement in line with national priorities.

In September 2023, Yemen also benefited from a \$20 million UFE allocation to meet the life-saving needs of returnees, IDPs and host communities – at a time when substantial funding gaps were compelling humanitarian actors to scale back the response.

The allocation supports the provision of multi-sectoral assistance to enhance resilience through livelihood activities and shelter support, and ensure access to essential basic services. Two Yemen governorates on the front-line of the conflict, Saada and Marib, were selected for this CERF allocation. These areas, which have suffered widespread destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods, are witnessing the return and local integration of displaced populations.

The CERF funding complemented some \$7 million from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), part of a broader standard allocation made in July 2023. The YHF envelope was specifically aimed at improving living conditions and mitigating health and protection risks for vulnerable people – namely, returnees and households in protracted displacement – in IDP sites and host communities across underserved areas.

The CERF UFE strategy was developed concurrently with the IDSF proposal. The IDSF proposal comprised activities that are expected to complement CERF and YHF funding, including intention surveys to inform follow-up humanitarian interventions – such as the regeneration of economic activities and provision of critical services – as well as activities aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence between returnees and host communities, and creating a conducive environment for longer-term settlement. While the CERF UFE allocation prioritizes humanitarian, life-saving activities, it also acts as a catalyst for the long-term impact activities proposed by the IDSF. This will help build momentum for a transition to durable solutions and leverage additional resources from donors who are interested in funding this area in complementarity and in coordination with the DSWG.



Leveraging complementarity of OCHA Pooled Funds in Sudan

When CERF and Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) resources are provided to help people in the same crises, RC/HCs ensure that the resources are used in a complementary and coherent manner.

OCHA helps RC/HCs translate this vision into allocation strategies, ensuring that funding is used to achieve the greatest overall impact – a continuing priority for OCHA and its partners.

In mid-April 2023, the escalation of the conflict in Sudan aggravated what was already a dire situation, with a 60 per cent increase in the number of people needing humanitarian assistance – up to some 25 million. In response to the escalating crisis, CERF allocated \$22 million in June 2023 through its RR window. This RR allocation complemented a \$18 million CERF UFE allocation, which was endorsed in February 2023 but re-prioritized to address the most time-critical and life-threatening needs arising from the new conflict, and a \$37 million allocation launched by the Sudan Humanitarian Fund, both under implementation at the time of disbursement of the RR allocation.

While the CERF RR allocation was used to strengthen the humanitarian response by enabling UN agencies to increase the coverage of life-saving services across all clusters in areas with less access constraints – hosting over two-thirds of the people displaced by the hostilities – the allocation from the Sudan Humanitarian Fund supported a consortia of humanitarian partners and grassroots entities to de-

liver vital emergency services in the hard-to-access areas of Khartoum and the Darfur states. Furthermore, the CERF RR allocation supported humanitarian coordination structures, which had been hindered by the challenging security situation, by funding crucial common services for the wider humanitarian community, such as telecommunications, safety and security, and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service.

This was followed by an additional \$20 million CERF RR allocation in August 2023 to meet the increasing funding requirements of the revised Humanitarian Response Plan, resulting from the substantial increase in the number of people affected and the growing humanitarian needs. The timing of the CERF and the Sudan Humanitarian Fund allocations has allowed partners to sustain ongoing response efforts and adjust to the rapidly changing operational conditions, despite the sporadic injection of funding from donors.

During the year, CERF released a total of \$106 million, ensuring essential care, protection and basic services for the millions of people affected by conflict and displacement both inside Sudan and in neighbouring countries (the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan). Together with allocations of nearly \$80 million from the CBPFs in Sudan and South Sudan, this has helped to sustain the humanitarian response at a uniquely challenging time of widespread and severe needs.

Ethiopia. Sudanese refugee Mussa, 25, waits for customers at his shop, where he sells sandals and food items, in Sherkole refugee camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of northwestern Ethiopia. UNHCR and partners, with funding from CERF, are providing basic life-saving assistance such as shelter, food, water and emergency health services at the site. In 2023, CERF provided \$106M to assist millions affected by the Sudan crisis, both inside Sudan and in neighboring countries. Photo: UNHCR/Tiksa Negeri

Gaza. A WFP food distribution.
Photo: WFP

CERF recipient agencies

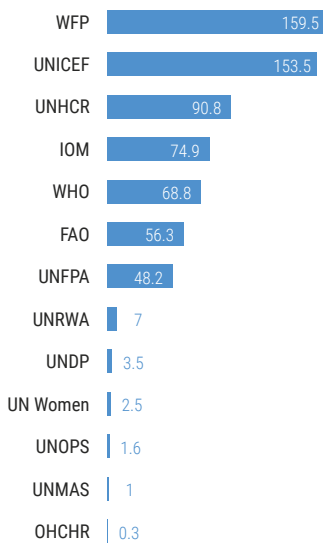


CERF recipient agencies

In 2023, CERF allocated some \$668 million to 13 UN agencies to deliver life-saving assistance to millions of people around the globe, in collaboration with other humanitarian partners on the ground. WFP was the Fund's top recipient agency, followed by UNICEF and UNHCR.

2023 CERF FUNDING TO UN AGENCIES

in US\$ million



Total amounts allocated by CERF to projects endorsed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator through 31 December 2023.

WFP



With **\$159.5** million in funding, equivalent to 24 per cent of total CERF allocations, the World Food Programme (WFP) was the top recipient of CERF funding in 2023. As the world continued to grapple with alarmingly high levels of food insecurity and humanitarian needs, support from CERF enabled WFP to provide **life-saving food security** and nutrition assistance across **32 countries** – often one of the first sources of funding received by the agency. CERF funding also contributed to WFP's provision of essential common services for humanitarian actors. Afghanistan, South Sudan, Haiti and Burkina Faso received the highest allocations of CERF funding for WFP operations.



In 2023, hunger surged in many parts of the world, but the gap between global humanitarian needs and the resources available to meet them grew wider. WFP was forced to end lifesaving support to millions of people in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria, due to funding constraints, and cut rations to many more. Existing emergencies grew worse in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti and Myanmar, while new hunger crises erupted in Sudan and Palestine. The resources received from CERF were invaluable as WFP mobilized to protect the most vulnerable communities from starvation. We could not have done this without our strong partnership with CERF and all its donors – thank you. Your continued support and collaboration will be just as important in 2024.”

Cindy McCain, WFP Executive Director

UNICEF



With **\$153.5M**, or 23 per cent of overall CERF funding, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was the second-largest recipient agency in 2023. CERF enabled UNICEF to respond to the needs of **children and families** in crisis in **39 countries**. Emergency responses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and Syria together accounted for 27 per cent of the CERF allocations to UNICEF. Around 30 per cent of the CERF allocations to UNICEF were directed towards humanitarian responses to climate-induced emergencies, including floods, drought and storms. CERF funding also helped UNICEF provide critical support for public health emergencies, including through the activation of the anticipatory action framework for cholera in the DRC.



Around the world in 2023, millions of children faced a complex array of humanitarian crises that threatened their lives and their rights. These included new and protracted conflicts, disasters, disease outbreaks, and the impacts of climate change. Thanks to our strong partnership with CERF, UNICEF provided essential humanitarian assistance to children affected by crises in 39 countries over the course of the year. CERF also provided vital support to some of UNICEF's most under-resourced humanitarian operations. As always, UNICEF is grateful to CERF and its donors for helping to make our work for children possible.

*Catherine Russell,
UNICEF Executive Director*

UNHCR



With **\$90.8M**, or 14 per cent of total CERF funds allocated, CERF enabled the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to **assist vulnerable refugees and displaced people** across **27 countries**. CERF's rapid turnaround helped UNHCR to immediately address critical needs during crises, before other funding sources were made available, from the catastrophic earthquake in Türkiye and Syria to the refugee crisis triggered by the conflict in Sudan. CERF also enabled UNHCR to meet the needs of populations in protracted crises and forgotten emergencies.

In 2023, CERF has been critical in helping UNHCR to react immediately to this year's most catastrophic crises; from conflict in Sudan to the terrible earthquake in Türkiye and Syria, and many more. In addition, CERF has been steadfast in helping UNHCR deliver aid in some of the most forgotten situations, such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria or Yemen

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

FAO



With **\$56.3M**, CERF enabled the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to respond to **food security crises and threats to people's livelihoods** in **25 countries**. FAO was a recipient of CERF's early action allocation for famine prevention in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, receiving a total of \$22.9 million, or 22 per cent of the total \$104 million allocated. The remaining CERF Rapid Response funding enabled FAO to provide critical agricultural assistance to vulnerable rural households affected by conflict, natural disasters and El Niño-induced crises globally.



Whenever and wherever a crisis strikes, CERF acts as a vital supporter of FAO's emergency response. With food insecurity worsening, CERF's quick funding enables FAO to implement time-sensitive agricultural assistance, avoid the loss of livelihoods and ultimately save lives. In Somalia, for example, CERF's funding allowed FAO to assist drought-affected agropastoral and pastoral communities. This support enabled 60,000 people to meet their immediate food needs and have veterinary support for their animals.

Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General

IOM



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) received **\$74.9M**, enabling the organization to deliver high-quality and **life-saving assistance to displaced persons, refugees, migrants, returnees and host communities** in **26** different **countries** or **contexts**. CERF funds supported, among others, cash and voucher assistance for timely and flexible responses to the diverse needs of people affected by natural hazards and conflict, along with robust Accountability to Affected People mechanisms.

IOM is grateful for the invaluable support CERF provides. Across continents, CERF funds have helped IOM respond in a timely and effective way to help the most vulnerable in times of crisis. Climate hazards have multiplied in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas, but when disasters happened, CERF funds enabled IOM to help restore the dignity and the living conditions in thousands of communities.

Amy Pope, IOM Director-General

WHO



In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) received **\$68.6M** from CERF. This funding enabled WHO to respond quickly to a range of **health emergencies and provide essential life-saving health services** in **30 countries**. For example, CERF's support was instrumental in scaling up WHO's response to cholera outbreaks in Ethiopia and providing critical services in response to Storm Daniel in Libya. In the DRC, CERF's support to the anticipatory action framework for cholera enabled WHO to provide medical care to 200,000 patients in North Kivu and support the scale-up of community-based epidemiological surveillance.

As conflict and climate change destroy lives and livelihoods, CERF's life-saving interventions have never been more critical, for the health and survival of millions of people.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General



UNFPA

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) received **\$48.2M** from CERF, enabling the agency to deliver **comprehensive and integrated gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health responses** in **34 countries**. This support not only ensured life-saving assistance for the most vulnerable, but also contributed to the overall response and coordination in humanitarian emergencies, including with local partners.



CERF funding has been instrumental in enhancing UNFPA's emergency response efforts, enabling us to address the persistent demand for crisis contexts. The flexibility and support provided by CERF have been invaluable in ensuring timely and effective support for those most in need during acute humanitarian crises.

*Dr. Natalia Kanem,
UNFPA Executive Director*



UN Women

UN Women received **\$2.5M** from CERF, which enabled **critical protection of the most at-risk women and girls** in Colombia, Malawi, the OPT and Uganda.



The humanitarian system is increasingly under strain with today's proliferation of crisis. The CERF is an invaluable tool for the humanitarian system and UN Women, in ensuring desperately needed support reaches populations in need in gender responsive ways. As examples, in Colombia, Bangladesh, Uganda and in Malawi, CERF funding allowed UN Women to provide emergency assistance to impacted women and girls, and to support and build the capacity of women's organizations to engage in the humanitarian system and as frontline responders.

*Sima Bahous,
UN Women Executive Director*

UNRWA

In 2023, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) re-

ceived **\$7M** from CERF, which was used to address the **most urgent humanitarian needs in both Syria**, following the destructive earthquake in February 2023, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), in response to the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. CERF funding boosted UNRWA's capacity to allocate emergency funding towards these new crises and contributed to ensuring the continuity of the agency's work at a time of exceptional resource shortfalls, helping to provide immediate relief to people in need. In July, CERF also provided a short-term loan of \$10 million to UNRWA to help manage a severe cash-flow crisis.



CERF support has been essential in helping UNRWA to meet some of the need for emergency life-saving assistance while ensuring the continuity of its core services. The immediate deployment of resources from the CERF in 2023 to the UNRWA emergency response in the Gaza Strip and Syria is another compelling demonstration of CERF's critical role in alleviating humanitarian disasters.

*Philippe Lazzarini,
UNRWA Commissioner General*



UNMAS

The United Nations Mine Action Service

(UNMAS) received **\$2.6M** in CERF funding to **conduct critical mine awareness** and risk reduction activities in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia and the OPT. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) served as the grant manager.



UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) received a total

of **\$3.5M** from CERF to support **livelihoods recovery** for the most vulnerable in four countries (Armenia, Eritrea, Sudan and Türkiye).



OHCHR

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received **\$299,000** to provide **protection to vulnerable communities** affected by gang violence in Haiti. The rapid disbursement of CERF funding allowed OHCHR to strengthen its localized response approach in partnership with six local community-based organizations.



Grants from the CERF have enabled my Office to provide life-saving assistance to survivors of gang violence in Haiti, particularly in the Port-au-Prince area, including essential services and referrals. Our project there was built, hand in hand, with local organizations and this has been critical to ensuring the voices of those affected are taken into account. The funding provided by CERF is lifesaving, and I extend my thanks to the Fund and its donors for enabling this vital support.

Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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by



Governance of CERF

UN Headquarters, New York. Secretary-General António Guterres ahead of the high-level pledging event on the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for 2024.

Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

CERF Advisory Group

The CERF Advisory Group was established to advise the Secretary-General, through the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), on the use and impact of the Fund. Membership selection procedures are designed to ensure the necessary expertise in the Group, while also considering appropriate geographic and gender diversity among the members. The Advisory Group holds two official meetings a year. In 2023, the first meeting took place in June, and the second in December.

In 2023, CERF worked closely with the Advisory Group to help members fulfil their functions as champions of CERF. During the year, Advisory Group members played a significant role as advocates for the Fund.

In June, the Advisory Group met in Geneva, where it discussed the humanitarian system's response capacity with the ERC, as well as the ERC's priorities for CERF. The Advisory Group voiced its appreciation for the management of the Fund, noting that CERF is becoming increasingly important for enabling the humanitarian system to respond rapidly to the growing humanitarian needs and ensure relevant prioritization of funding in the context of a severe global funding crisis. The Advisory Group reiterated its support for CERF's continued scale-up of anticipatory action initiatives and applauded CERF's role as a global leader in financing coordinated humanitarian anticipatory

action frameworks. In a dedicated session on climate financing, the Group expressed support for a strengthened role for CERF in the climate financing space and endorsed further exploration by OCHA of ways to achieve this.

In December, the CERF Advisory Group convened in New York to discuss, among other things, the CERF Climate Action Account that was launched at UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) (see page 40). The Group articulated its backing of the Climate Action Account as a vehicle to help attract additional donor funding for scaling up CERF's support for climate-related humanitarian response and anticipatory action. The Group discussed the CERF loan element with the ERC, expressing support for granting it greater flexibility under exceptional circumstances and for limited periods of time. In December, the Advisory Group also discussed with selected Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) the important role that CERF plays in humanitarian operations, including in helping to prioritize resources for the most vulnerable.

In both meetings, the Advisory Group discussed fundraising for CERF and ways to ensure progress towards the \$1 billion target. The Group reiterated its availability to support CERF advocacy and peer-to-peer efforts and emphasized the importance of diversifying the donor base through private sector funding and potential innovative financing opportunities. In both meetings, the Group applauded CERF's efforts to advance and promote locally-led responses, and strengthen collective accountability to affected people. Other topics discussed during the meetings of the Group included the increased importance of strategic prioritization of CERF resources; the need for CERF to continue to evolve and innovate, while, at the same time, remaining focused on the Fund's core comparative advantages; and CERF's important role in generating learning from new initiatives and disseminating this to the wider humanitarian system.



Detailed recommendations and conclusions from the Advisory Group meetings are published on the [CERF website](#)



In 2023, CERF provided much-needed humanitarian assistance in 40 countries, ranging from emergencies in Gaza, Sudan and Armenia to invisible crises in Central Africa, Chad and Yemen and natural disasters in Syria, Türkiye, Libya and Somalia. CERF drives innovation – including anticipatory approaches enabling CERF to disburse critical funding within minutes. Germany is CERF's largest donor and calls upon others to join us in financing this important humanitarian financing instrument.

*Susanne Fries-Gaier, Chair of CERF Advisory Group 2023,
Director for Humanitarian Assistance, German Federal Foreign Office*

Commitment to learning



CERF is committed to continuous learning to ensure that its approaches and processes are fit-for-purpose and well adapted to the changing requirements of the humanitarian landscape, while, at the same time, ensuring that learning is disseminated to partners to contribute to positive change in the humanitarian system. CERF builds knowledge and learning in several ways, including through consultations with partners, formal evaluations, studies, grant reports and dedicated learning initiatives as part of thematic allocations. These all provide valuable insights into CERF's added value and help identify best practices for replication or areas that can be improved for greater impact beyond CERF-funded operations.



Review of CERF's disability envelope

Every year since 2009, CERF has commissioned independent studies under its **Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF)**.⁸ These studies, which are carried out by independent consultants, assess CERF's added value to humanitarian responses around the world and review whether allocations lead to meaningful results aligned with CERF's mandate. Such reviews are important stocktaking exercises, helping to answer critical strategic questions and guide CERF's operations. They also provide valuable input into global discussions with the broader humanitarian community.

⁸ [Performance and Accountability Framework | CERF](#)

In 2023, a 'PAF review' of a \$10 million disability envelope provided under the second Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) round of 2021 was finalized. The main objective of the review was to generate learning from this dedicated envelope. The envelope⁹ aimed to support interventions to address the specific requirements of persons with disabilities and to enhance the ability of humanitarian actors to develop and implement quality programmes that are inclusive of persons with disabilities. The allocation also sought to help promote greater accountability in the humanitarian system, including by increasing and improving the participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

The review found that the allocation had a positive impact and contributed to promoting disability inclusion on the ground, leading to actions and plans for improved disability inclusion in several recipient countries. In some instances, the envelope catalysed additional allocations from respective Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) – such as the dedicated allocation of \$2.5 million for disability inclusion by the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund, provided in complementarity with the CERF envelope. At the same time, some recipient countries reported challenges arising from limited disability-inclusion structures, systems, data and timelines. The recommendations of the report for CERF were discussed with the CERF Advisory Group in December 2023 and are being implemented by OCHA. The recommendations include allowing added time for in-country consultations with technical experts and members of OPDs during the development of allocation strategies, enhancing CERF's internal expertise in disability inclusion, and rolling out improved processes for data collection on disability during the application and reporting stage. The full review report is available [here](#).

⁹ Afghanistan, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela.



Review of CERF's dedicated localization efforts

In 2023, CERF also launched a PAF review on CERF's efforts to strengthen localization in humanitarian programming through the 2022 and 2023 UFE allocations (see page 63). The main objectives of this review are to generate learning from efforts to advance localization through CERF. The review is expected not only to inform CERF's allocations processes, but also to advance the overall localization agenda within the humanitarian sector. The report will be finalized in 2024, published on the CERF website and discussed with the CERF Advisory Group.



Review of CERF allocation to address gender-based violence

In 2023, CERF also benefited from an external review of its 2020 allocation to address gender-based violence (GBV) in 11 countries through an innovative two-year global block grant. In line with CERF's prioritization of learning, the allocation included a dedicated envelope for learning purposes – a novel investment for CERF.

The \$25 million allocation to UNFPA and UN Women was geared towards achieving measurable outcomes in prevention and mitigation of GBV incidents, response to GBV, and the strengthening of the capacity and inclusion of local responders in coordination structures at country level. The allocation occurred at a crucial moment when GBV needs were escalating globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting a unique opportunity to dedicate a substantial funding envelope to much-needed GBV interventions. This unique envelope enabled the CERF recipients, UNFPA and UN Women, to commission an external evaluation of the grant. This programme-focused evaluation complements the [rapid review of the allocation](#) that CERF had already commissioned earlier in the cycle.

The evaluation emphasized the positive impact of the grant, including on the efficiency of GBV prevention and response, even if results and approaches varied greatly between countries. Notably, it highlighted the grant's role in empowering local women-led organizations (WLOs), sub-granting over 40 per cent of the total allocation to these organizations (exceeding the initial target of 30 per cent), and enhancing their organizational and technical capacities – including through the increased participation of WLOs in humanitarian coordination structures, such as the GBV sub-cluster. The evaluation found that the CERF funds

achieved some small-scale and incremental positive results in changing 'social norms' around GBV. Lastly, the evaluation found that the CERF allocation successfully engaged UNFPA and UN Women in a collaborative effort at the global level to address GBV and to test new ways of working and approaches in GBV responses.

While the allocation occurred at a time of exceptional needs, its unique learning focus and the resulting evaluation offered a wide range of actionable recommendations for addressing GBV for UNFPA and UN Women, as well as for OCHA and the broader GBV sub-sector. Recommendations include allocating adequate additional funds to coordination mechanisms and capacity strengthening, establishing systematic funding targets for WLOs, and emphasizing the inclusion of GBV in needs assessments conducted by clusters, as well as ensuring that related funding needs are well reflected in Humanitarian Response Plans. This initiative was complemented by two related reviews by UNFPA and UN Women on the empowerment of WLOs and social norms, respectively. The findings of the evaluation of relevance to CERF were discussed with the CERF Advisory Group in December 2023. The evaluation report is available [here](#).



Learning from anticipatory action

Generating systemic learning is key to scaling up collective anticipatory action (AA), in line with OCHA's strategic priorities. During 2023, CERF continued to ensure that dedicated learning activities were built into all allocations from AA frameworks. OCHA and its partners have developed a multi-dimensional learning framework that combines agency-specific monitoring and evaluation, process learning, and independent impact evaluations to systematically capture evidence and learning from these initiatives. For instance, two impact studies on CERF-funded AA during the 2021 drought in Ethiopia, both released in 2023, highlight significant improvements in the quality of life for recipients. Some 60 per cent of the 1,000 plus beneficiaries surveyed – or three in five respondents – reported improvements in their quality of life, stating that CERF-funded assistance increased their ability to afford food, livelihood inputs and household bills. Learning from AA frameworks is considered a common good for the humanitarian community, and results and reports are available on [OCHA's website](#).

Transparency and accountability

Donors to CERF entrust the ERC, on behalf of the Secretary-General, with managing hundreds of millions in unearmarked funding to achieve the best possible humanitarian outcomes. Ensuring full transparency and real-time data on CERF-supported operations is therefore a top priority. CERF's transparency and accountability processes are guided by the CERF PAF,¹⁰ which delineates accountability mechanisms and reporting processes for the Fund. The framework is used by CERF to clarify accountability, performance and management expectations among different actors, organized around a set of agreed outputs, outcomes and impacts.



Components of CERF transparency

In line with its commitment to promoting transparency, CERF abides by the [International Aid Transparency Initiative \(IATI\)](#) standards to ensure information is easy to access, understand and use for the broader public. In 2023, CERF continued to invest in robust reporting under the IATI.¹¹ As a result, CERF's IATI transparency score remained stable at 95 per cent, placing CERF among the top 10 of the 1,550 organizations publishing their data to IATI standards. CERF continues to publish all grant decisions on its [website](#), as well as via the [Financial Tracking Service](#) and the [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#). CERF's Annual Results Reports and a broad range of infographics are also available on the CERF website, along with allocation methodologies, data sets and summaries of country selection processes for all UFE allocations.

¹⁰ <https://cerf.un.org/partner-resources/performance-and-accountability/performance-and-accountability-framework>

¹¹ The overall score is a composite of the ratings for timeliness, the extent to which data is forward-looking, and comprehensiveness: http://publishingstats.iatistandard.org/summary_stats.htm

In 2023, OCHA made significant strides in the development of a joint online Grant Management System (OneGMS). This system enhances real-time communication of allocations through the standardization of data published across the Pooled Funds data hubs. OneGMS also helps to harmonize aspects of CERF and CBPFs grant management processes and grant proposal formats. During the year, OCHA successfully launched OneGMS for all CBPFs, providing comprehensive support to field colleagues through training sessions for implementing partners and the development of extensive guidance materials to sustain the momentum. OCHA is now preparing to launch OneGMS for CERF, with dedicated training and roll-out scheduled for 2024. This platform will transition the entire CERF allocation process online, improving transparency and standardizing templates across Pooled Funds.

OCHA also continued to refine its online management and transparency tools. These include an online allocation tracker that provides real-time information on each CERF allocation, including the trigger for CERF funding and the assistance provided. This tool gives stakeholders the option of receiving email notifications of new allocations as soon as these are decided by the ERC.

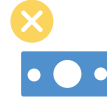
OCHA further developed its Pooled Fund data hubs. The [CERF Data Hub](#) provides a wide array of interactive visuals, allowing stakeholders easy access to data on how individual contributions have been allocated across global humanitarian operations since CERF's

inception in 2006. The [OCHA Pooled Funds Data Hub](#), on the other hand, serves as a one-stop data visualization platform providing data on CERF and CBPFs allocations and donor contributions. The hub also offers historical information on both CERF and CBPFs allocations, and allows users to view funding flows by region, country, partner, donor and project. OCHA is currently in the process of creating innovative visual content focusing on various thematic areas, helping to present CERF and CBPFs allocations in a more engaging and accessible format.



Accountability in the use of funds

Monitoring and reporting are essential for accounting to the ERC, the Secretary-General and Member States on the use of CERF funds. The RC/HC is responsible for overseeing the prioritization and implementation of CERF-funded responses and for reporting on the implementation, progress and results achieved when project activities are completed. Recipient agencies are responsible for monitoring the implementation of individual CERF projects, among others, by giving the RC/HC and the Humanitarian Country Team an interim update, to show whether CERF-funded activities are implemented as intended and enable corrective actions if necessary. Following the completion of CERF-funded activities, an RC/HC report is prepared. While the RC/HC takes the lead, the reporting process is a joint effort by all relevant stakeholders at country level, helping to foster a collective reflection on the CERF process and the results achieved. These reports are published on the [CERF website](#) and shared by the RC/HC with all relevant stakeholders at country level.



Monitoring fraud investigations

Fraud poses a serious risk to humanitarian efforts. Potential cases of fraud related to CERF grants are treated in accordance with the rules, regulations and oversight mechanisms of the recipient UN agencies.

To ensure adequate transparency and accountability, CERF guidance sets out procedures for informing donors of potential cases of fraud in CERF-funded projects implemented by UN agencies and their partners. The guidance, developed in consultation with the CERF Advisory Group and recipient agencies, outlines the communications responsibilities of recipient agencies and CERF.

To ensure effective and consistent monitoring of investigations into potential fraud cases, CERF employs internal standard operating procedures covering all phases of the process, from initial notification by partners to the conclusion of investigations. The management of fraud processes for OCHA-managed Pooled Funds rests with the Oversight and Compliance Unit to ensure streamlining of fraud response processes between CERF and CBPFs. In line with the communications guidance, interested donors are kept informed of any new cases reported to CERF, as well as any developments in ongoing investigations. The annual report of the Secretary-General on CERF also provides a summary of reported cases.

Twice a year, CERF contacts agencies to remind them to report any new cases of possible fraudulent use of CERF funds and to provide regular updates on existing cases. CERF follows ongoing cases and remains in close contact with the relevant agencies until cases have been closed. Subject to the outcome of investigations, CERF may work with recipient agencies to recover funds, where feasible and appropriate. Twice a year, CERF sends a consolidated overview of ongoing cases to donors and the Advisory Group.

Bangladesh. An indigenous flood-affected smallholder farmer is going home after receiving lifesaving agricultural inputs such as rice, seeds, fertilizer and spades during the distribution event. CERF and other donors funded this program in response to the recent flash-flood.

Photo: FAO/Saikat Mojumder



#InvestInHumanity

DONATE TO CERF



Member States, observers and other authorities

OCHA Donor Relations Section Geneva, Switzerland
ocha.donor.relations@un.org

Private donors and individuals

ONLINE DONATIONS

Visit: bit.ly/GIVETOCERF

BANK TRANSFER TO CERF

Contact the CERF secretariat in New York, USA

Chulmin Kang
Chief, Finance and Administration Unit
kang@un.org
+1 212 963 6362

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE

Cheques need to be made out to the United Nations Foundation. The memo line of the cheques should read "Donation to CERF."

Cheques should be mailed to:
United Nations Foundation/Central Emergency Response Fund
P.O. Box 96721
Washington, D.C. 20090-6721, USA

Please include your name and contact details so that CERF can track and respond to your contribution accordingly. Note: US tax-deductible donations can also be made via money order or wire transfer.

REAL-TIME INFORMATION

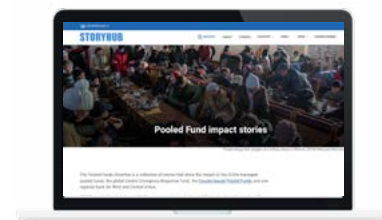


For real-time contribution and allocation data with easy-to-use filters and views please visit:

Pooled Fund Data Hub
<https://pfddata.unocha.org>

CERF Data Hub
cerf.data.unocha.org

POOLED FUND IMPACT STORIES



For more impact stories showing CERF and the Country-based Pooled Funds in action:

pooledfunds.impact.unocha.org/fund/cerf

CERF was born out of necessity and it continues through generosity. Donors enable CERF to support emergency life-saving humanitarian activities throughout the world.

As crises persist, so does our resolve.


With your help, we respond.

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