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United Nations  
**CERF**

Central  
Emergency  
Response  
Fund

**A fund  
for all,  
by all**



Central Emergency Response Fund  
High-level Pledging Event for 2026

## Concept Note

Last updated: 13 November 2025

### **The Central Emergency Response Fund High-Level Pledging Event for 2026: 20 years of saving lives together.**

*Event hosted in collaboration with the Governments of Ireland and the Philippines*

For two decades, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has been the UN's emergency response engine. Since 2006, CERF has allocated \$10 billion to enable timely, life-saving assistance for millions in over 110 countries, from conflict zones to communities affected by natural disasters. It is often the first fund to respond when emergencies strike, and one of the few mechanisms specifically designed to support the most vulnerable communities in underfunded and overlooked crises.

CERF does not just react when crises strike; it anticipates, innovates and transforms. It is the largest global financier of anticipatory action, mitigating the impact of crises before they fully unfold. Enabled by the CERF Climate Action Account, the Fund advances climate-smart humanitarian action that addresses urgent needs while building resilience to future climate threats. It promotes the use of multi-purpose cash assistance to empower people to make their own choices, backs collective mechanisms that make humanitarian assistance more responsive to community feedback, and provides funding for activities that address the needs of the most vulnerable.

Today, CERF's mission is more urgent than ever. Humanitarian needs are deepening, operational challenges are mounting, and financial resources are shrinking. These pressures are driving a sweeping reform, referred to as the "Humanitarian Reset". In this context, CERF stands out as a proven mechanism that delivers on the system's ambition: to do better with less. As the humanitarian

### **Date and venue**

**Tuesday, 9 December 2025**

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

Format: In-person

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

### **Registration**

Kindly complete one form per delegation. Delegations may register a maximum of three delegates to attend in-person. Kindly click [here](#) to register.

The deadline to register and send the pledge form is **Tuesday, 2 December 2025 COB New York**

### **Contacts**

For more information you may visit the [website](#).

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

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## CERF HIGH-LEVEL PLEDGING EVENT FOR 2026

system strives to become more agile and accountable, CERF sets a benchmark for others to follow. By pooling resources together, CERF empowers trusted humanitarian leaders in crisis zones, closest to affected communities, with the means to act decisively and fast through coordinated, collective action on the ground. Its simplicity and efficiency allow UN agencies and their partners to focus on delivering aid, not navigating bureaucracy. Moreover, the Fund promotes forward-looking and inclusive responses, from climate-smart programming to gender-responsive and protection-centered approaches. It demonstrates what works and inspires others to scale it, showing what effective humanitarian action truly looks like.

Despite CERF's 20-year legacy of impact and growing relevance for global humanitarian response, the Fund is facing its lowest projected income in a decade. This is not just a funding shortfall; it's a missed opportunity to save lives and reshape humanitarian action for the better. If CERF is to play the role the world needs it to play in a new humanitarian order, it must be properly resourced. The annual funding target of \$1 billion, endorsed by the General Assembly in 2016, is not a soft goal; it's the bare minimum.

New donors must step up, and existing donors must go further. This is not the time for incremental change; it's time to double down.

The future of humanitarian action demands bold investment in what works. CERF is that investment. When crises happen, CERF is the tool governments and partners can rely on to act fast and deliver solutions, shifting power closer to affected communities, cutting inefficiencies, and making sure every contribution counts. The **CERF High-Level Pledging Event for 2026** offers Member States and other donors a chance not only to honour the Fund's legacy and express global solidarity, but to boldly invest in its future: a fund that delivers when it matters most and continues to redefine the future of humanitarian action.

#### The High-Level Pledging Event will:

- Celebrate CERF's 20-year legacy of alleviating human suffering around the world through rapid, strategic and catalytic funding, including the launch of the CERF@20 campaign;
- Reaffirm CERF's pivotal role in responding to conflict-driven crises, enabling partners to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to the most vulnerable.
- Highlight CERF's growing role in acting in anticipation of, and response to, climate-related humanitarian crises, helping the most vulnerable communities build resilience and adaptive capacity against future threats.
- Showcase CERF's impact in supporting current reform efforts towards a more effective and impactful humanitarian system that is driven by local priorities.
- Address CERF's funding shortfall and honor the funding target of \$1 billion, endorsed by the General Assembly in 2016.

#### Agenda

- **Opening segment:** Welcome remarks by the United Nations Secretary-General, **Mr. António Guterres**, followed by statements from the event co-hosts: the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian **Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC)**, **Mr. Tom Fletcher**, and Humanitarian Director at the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, **Ms. Nicole McHugh**, and High-level representative from the Philippines (TBC)
- **High-level panel:** A distinguished panel will focus on CERF's role in meeting the urgent life-saving needs of people in crises.
- **Statements and announcements:** Member States and partners to announce support and pledges to CERF for 2026 and potential additional top-ups for 2025. Interventions should be limited to two minutes each.

- **Closing segment:** Closing remarks by Mr. Tom Fletcher, USG/ERC, OCHA.

### Participants

Member States and partners are invited.

### Event Details

The Event will take place in-person on Tuesday, 9 December 2025, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (EST) in ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters in New York. Member States are invited to participate at the highest level possible. The Event will be live streamed on UN Web TV and is held in English. Each delegation may register a maximum of three delegates to attend the event in person.

### Media and social media

OCHA will launch CERF@20, a campaign marking two decades of CERF's life-saving impact, at the event. For more information or to engage in the campaign, please contact Tomas de Mul ([demul@un.org](mailto:demul@un.org)).

For more information on CERF highlights in 2025 and the Fund's 20-year legacy of impact, please refer to the document CERF: Facts and Figures.

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