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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Central Emergency Response Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a description of the activities of the Central Emergency Response Fund from 1 January to 31 December 2023, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/119](#). The Fund continued to play a key role in the global humanitarian response in 2023. During the reporting period, the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved \$667.9 million in support of life-saving humanitarian activities in 40 countries – the third highest amount in the history of the Fund. In addition, four loans were approved for a total value of \$40 million.

The Fund received \$558.5 million from its donors in 2023, the fifth highest annual income in its history. In the context of increasing humanitarian needs, continued support from Member States and other donors is crucial for enabling the Fund to meet the needs of people affected by humanitarian emergencies worldwide and to attain its increased annual funding target of \$1 billion, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/127](#).

* [A/79/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/119](#) on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the detailed use of the Central Emergency Response Fund. The report covers the activities carried out under the Fund from 1 January to 31 December 2023.

II. Overview of the funding commitments of the Fund

2. With \$667.9 million provided in 2023 for humanitarian activities in 40 countries (see table below and annex I), the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved the third highest amount in a single year in the history of the Fund. In addition, in 2023, four loans totalling \$40 million were approved. Between its inception in 2005 and the end of 2023, the Fund has provided some \$8.9 billion for humanitarian assistance in 120 countries, territories or areas. Grants were directly allocated to United Nations funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies.

A. Allocations by funding window

Central Emergency Response Fund allocations, 1 January to 31 December 2023

(United States dollars)

	<i>Rapid response window</i>	<i>Underfunded emergencies window</i>	<i>Total</i>
Amount approved	392 233 448	275 694 083	667 927 531
Number of recipient countries ^a	31	26	40
Number of projects funded	230	152	382

^a Some countries received allocations from both funding windows.

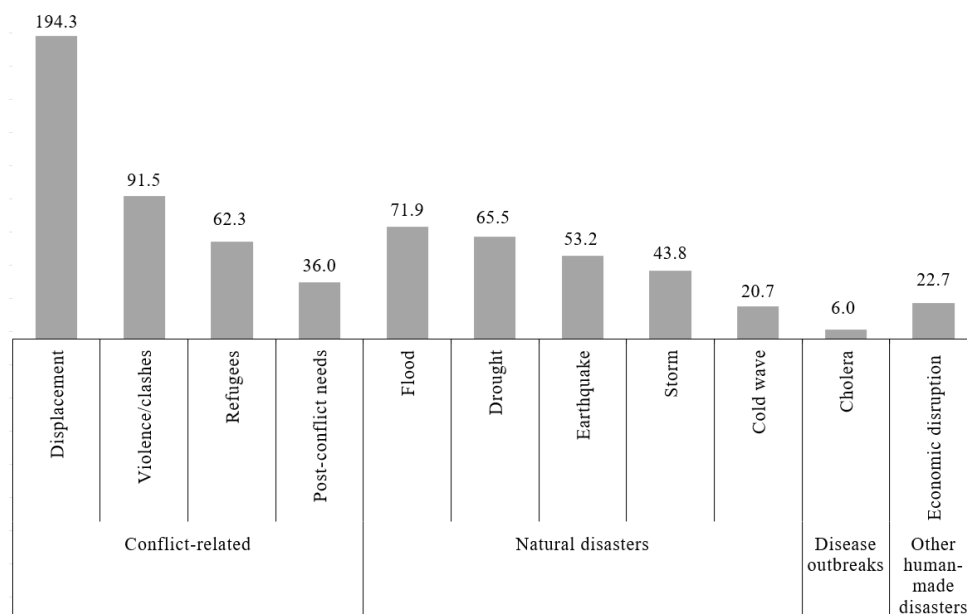
3. Allocations from the rapid response window help to initiate responses to humanitarian needs in the initial stages of a sudden-onset crisis or in the case of a significant deterioration of an existing emergency. In 2023, the Fund provided \$392.2 million through the rapid response window to 31 countries. Another \$275.7 million was allocated to 26 severely underfunded and neglected crises through the underfunded emergencies window – the highest amount in the history of the Fund. These allocations helped to sustain life-saving humanitarian operations and draw attention to funding gaps and humanitarian crises where donor interest may have waned.

B. Allocations by emergency type

4. Crises driven by conflict received the largest share of funding in 2023, totalling \$384.1 million (57.5 per cent). Of this, approximately 51 per cent was provided to humanitarian needs related to displacement, again demonstrating the important role of the Fund in supporting the response to people displaced by conflict. A total of \$255.1 million (38.2 per cent) was allocated to address the humanitarian consequences of climate-related and other natural disasters. In addition, some \$22.7 million (3.4 per cent) was provided for humanitarian needs related to severe economic crises, and another \$6 million (0.9 per cent) was allocated in response to disease outbreaks (see figure I).

Figure I
Central Emergency Response Fund allocations in 2023, by emergency type

(Millions of United States dollars)

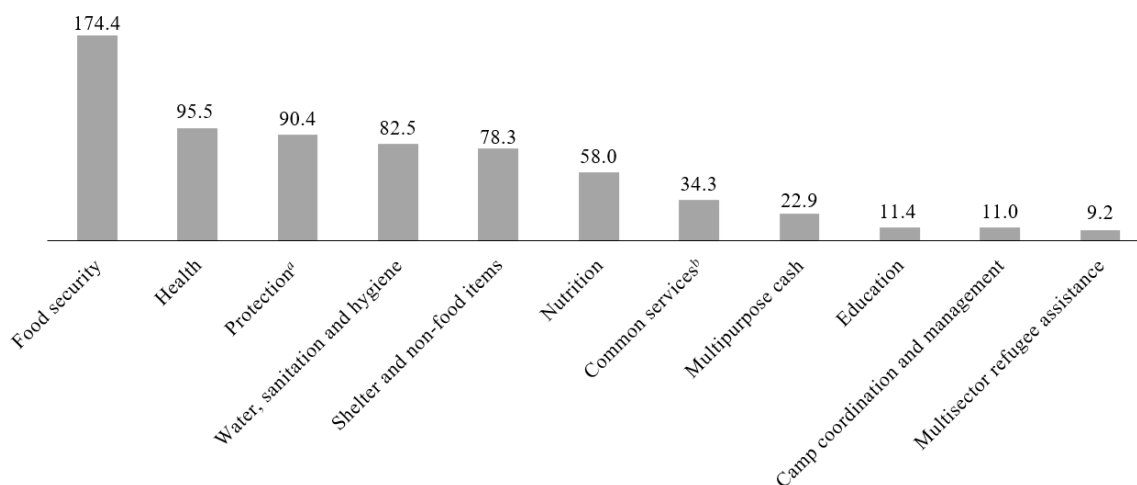


C. Allocations by sector

5. With a total of \$174.4 million (26.1 per cent), the food security sector was the highest funded sector in 2023. The health sector was the second most funded sector, receiving \$95.5 million (14.3 per cent), followed by the protection sector, which received \$90.4 million (13.5 per cent).

Figure II
Central Emergency Response Fund allocations in 2023, by sector

(Millions of United States dollars)



^a Protection activities include general protection and initiatives in child protection, human rights, accountability to affected people, gender-based violence prevention and response, and mine action.

^b Common services include common humanitarian air service, common logistics, common telecommunications, and safety and security of staff and operations.

D. Allocations by region

6. Humanitarian operations in Africa received \$383.4 million, the largest share of the 2023 allocations (57.4 per cent), followed by the Middle East with \$121.7 million (18.2 per cent), Asia and the Pacific with \$111.3 million (16.7 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean with \$51.5 million (7.7 per cent).

7. In Africa, some \$228.7 million (59.7 per cent of the total funding allocated to humanitarian operations in Africa) was used to address conflict-related disasters. Another \$148 million (38.7 per cent) was allocated in response to climate-related disasters. In addition, \$6 million (1.6 per cent) was allocated to address disease outbreaks. The Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia were the largest recipients of funding in Africa in 2023. The Sudan received \$60.1 million in response to displacement and violence, while the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan received allocations totalling \$46 million for humanitarian assistance to refugees fleeing the Sudan, bringing the total amount allocated in response to the crisis to \$106.1 million. The Democratic Republic of the Congo received \$45.8 million in response to conflict, mass displacement and cholera outbreaks, while Ethiopia received \$43.5 million in response to drought, flooding, conflict and displacement.

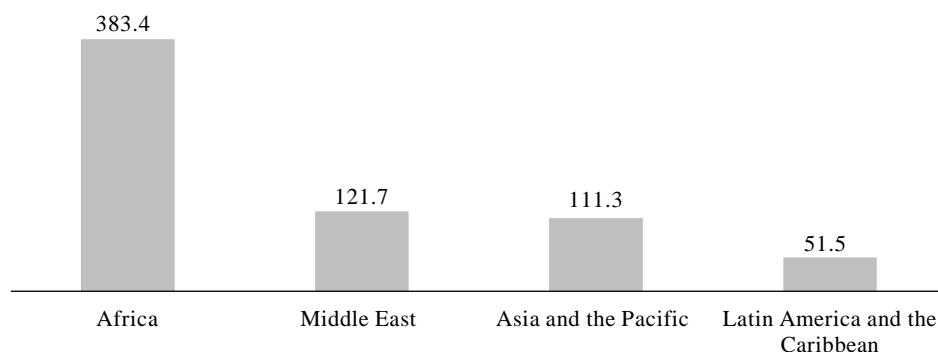
8. In the Middle East, \$65.5 million (53.8 per cent) of the \$121.7 million allocated to the region in 2023 was used to address needs caused by conflict. Another \$48.2 million (39.6 per cent) was provided in response to natural disasters. Lastly, \$8 million (6.6 per cent) was allocated to address severe economic crises. The Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory were the largest recipients in the region. A total of \$40 million was allocated to the Syrian Arab Republic and \$10 million to Türkiye in response to the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit the two countries on 6 February. Yemen received \$38 million to respond to displacement and multifaceted humanitarian needs resulting from conflict. The Occupied Palestinian Territory received \$18.7 million in response to multifaceted humanitarian needs stemming from the war in Gaza following the attacks of 7 October by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on Israel.

9. Of the total \$111.3 million allocated to the Asia and Pacific region, \$59.4 million (53.4 per cent) was allocated to address humanitarian needs resulting from conflict-related emergencies and \$51.9 million (46.6 per cent) was allocated in response to natural and climate-related disasters. Some \$53.7 million was provided to Afghanistan in response to mass displacement, multifaceted humanitarian post-conflict needs and the earthquake that struck the country on 7 October, making it the largest recipient country in the region. Myanmar was the second largest recipient in the region, receiving \$26.4 million in response to Cyclone Mocha and displacement. Bangladesh received the third highest amount, a total of \$18 million, in response to Cyclone Mocha, floods and displacement.

10. Of the \$51.5 million allocated to Latin America and the Caribbean, \$36.4 million (70.7 per cent) was used to address conflict-related needs stemming from violence and displacement, making conflict the most funded emergency type in the region. This was followed by contexts of severe economic crisis, accounting for \$8.2 million (15.9 per cent). Funding totalling \$6.9 million (13.4 per cent) was allocated in response to climate-related emergencies. Haiti received \$26.3 million, the largest amount in the region, in response to violence, protection needs and displacement. Over \$8.2 million was allocated to address humanitarian needs in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, while \$6.9 million was allocated in response to humanitarian needs resulting from floods in Peru.

Figure III
Central Emergency Response Fund allocations in 2023, by region

(Millions of United States dollars)



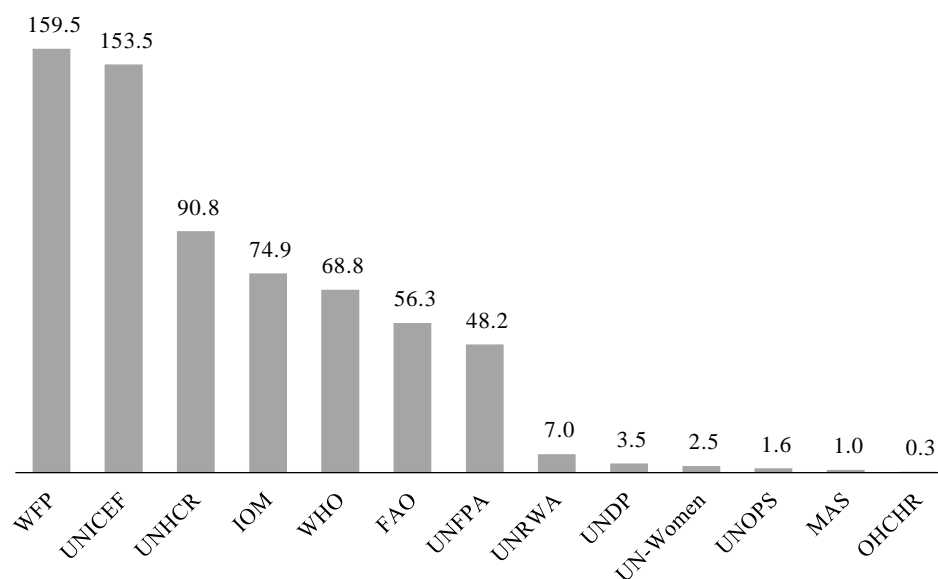
E. Allocations by United Nations entities

11. The United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme together received nearly half (46.9 per cent, or \$313 million) of the overall Fund allocations (see figure IV) to address humanitarian needs relating to food security, shelter, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, and health.

Figure IV

Central Emergency Response Fund in 2023, allocations by United Nations entity

(Millions of United States dollars)



Abbreviations: FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IOM, International Organization for Migration; MAS, Mine Action Service; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; UNOPS, United Nations Office for Project Services; WFP, World Food Programme; WHO, World Health Organization.

F. Loans

12. In 2023, the Fund's loan facility helped to cover critical cash-flow gaps that hampered humanitarian operations. In February, the Fund assisted the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund with a loan of \$10 million to fund urgent life-saving assistance following the earthquake that struck on 6 February. The loan, which was reimbursed in May, enabled the Fund to finance time-critical responses while waiting for donor pledges to materialize. In June, the Fund provided a \$20 million loan to the United Nations Development Programme to launch the FSO Safer operation in the Red Sea, off the coast of Yemen. The operation facilitated the safe transfer of 1 million barrels of oil from the Safer tanker, averting a massive oil spill. The loan was reimbursed in March 2024. In August 2023, the Fund provided a loan of \$10 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to help manage a severe cash-flow crisis for humanitarian assistance. The loan enabled UNRWA to continue to provide essential health care in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank. The loan was repaid by August 2024.

13. To further enhance the effectiveness of the Fund's loan facility in supporting critical humanitarian operations, the Fund's Advisory Group expressed, during its meeting in December 2023, its support for exploring means to enhance the flexibility of the Fund's loan element, in line with General Assembly resolutions [46/182](#) and [66/119](#).

III. Key highlights of the use of the Fund in 2023

People assisted by the Fund in 2023¹

14. The funding allocated in 2023 allowed for the provision of life-saving assistance to an estimated 32.8 million people, of which an estimated 24.8 million were affected by displacement, the highest proportion in the history of the Fund (75.6 per cent). Of the 32.8 million people assisted, 18.4 million (56.2 per cent) were women and girls and 16.3 million (49.8 per cent) were children. The share of women and girls receiving support from the Fund was higher in some sectors, such as the nutrition sector (69.9 per cent) and the protection sector (61.4 per cent). The funding also provided critical aid to 2.7 million persons with disabilities.

15. Among other achievements, 2023 allocations enabled:

- 17.4 million people to receive access to health-care services
- 9.9 million people to gain access to water, sanitation and hygiene services

¹ The Fund uses the number of people directly 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 funding only becomes available when resident and humanitarian coordinators share grant reports with the Fund, up to one year after receiving the allocations. Analyses have shown that funded projects consistently reach significantly more people than initially anticipated. The Fund will continue to monitor the reported data. The Fund applies a consistent methodology for tracking the number of people targeted. It requires all recipient agencies to provide detailed information on the number of people directly targeted and reached with each funded project. The multisectoral nature of funded assistance means that people may receive funded life-saving assistance through multiple sectors. To prevent double-counting, the Fund uses a two-step methodology. First, sector leads, in consultation with implementing agencies, identify areas of duplication within sectors. Second, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs country offices or resident and humanitarian coordinator offices identify duplications between sectors within the same Fund allocation.

- 6.5 million people to benefit from protection interventions
- 4.7 million people to receive food assistance
- 3.9 million people to benefit from camp management services, multisector refugee assistance or the provision of shelter or basic relief items
- 3.5 million people to receive access to nutritional support
- 2.8 million people to gain access to agriculture-based livelihood support
- 530,000 people to receive multipurpose cash, early recovery assistance or common services
- 178,000 people to benefit from access to education

16. In 2023, the Fund supported large humanitarian responses to conflict-related needs, an example of which is set out below.

17. In April 2023, the conflict between the army and paramilitary forces in the Sudan escalated, displacing millions of people. This came at a time when the Sudan was already experiencing one of the largest displacement and protection crises globally. The Fund responded by reprioritizing an \$18 million allocation from the underfunded emergencies window, endorsed on 1 March, to provide immediate life-saving assistance. As the situation deteriorated, the Fund granted two additional allocations from its rapid response window, resulting in a total of \$60.1 million in allocations to the Sudan in 2023. These funds were directed towards life-saving assistance related to protection, shelter, non-food items, food, nutrition, health and water, sanitation and hygiene, together with common services such as air transportation and telecommunications to enable humanitarian operations. Neighbouring countries received allocations totalling \$46 million to support humanitarian efforts for refugees fleeing the Sudan, bringing the total amount allocated in response to the crisis to \$106.1 million.

18. Responses to climate-related disasters received the second highest amount of funding in 2023. One example of an allocation made in response to such a disaster in 2023 is set out below.

19. Storm Daniel hit Libya in September, causing flash floods that affected approximately 884,000 people across five provinces. It resulted in the deaths of over 4,000 people as well as extensive infrastructure damage. In response, the Fund promptly allocated \$10 million to address the immediate and critical humanitarian needs across the shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, health and protection sectors, with a focus on at-risk demographics such as women, children, persons with disabilities and migrants. The allocation was used for a comprehensive package of integrated humanitarian interventions, assisting over 259,000 people by restoring critical services and fortifying protection mechanisms. It not only contributed to alleviating suffering in the immediate crisis but also strengthened systems and mechanisms that can support affected people in coping with similar future shocks.

20. In 2023, the Fund continued to play a critical role in responding to disease outbreaks. For example, by the end of May, after years with no cases, almost 2,000 new cholera cases with 44 deaths had been reported in Zimbabwe. The Fund allocated \$1 million for an urgent response, assisting 500,000 people. The allocation was used to support access to safe water, surveillance, infection prevention and control, case management, and risk communication and community engagement to empower communities to participate effectively in the prevention of the further spread of the disease. The funding was also used to strengthen capacities to mitigate future outbreaks by supporting surveillance, case management and infection prevention.

IV. Strategic initiatives of the Fund

21. Although the Fund represented only 2.3 per cent of all humanitarian funding recorded in 2023, its allocations played an important role in strengthening humanitarian responses. In 2023, the Fund launched a climate action account to help channel additional financing directly towards addressing the risks and impacts of climate-related disasters, continued to scale up anticipatory and early action allocations to ensure more timely and effective humanitarian action, reinforced efforts to support the localization of aid and furthered its commitment to more accountable and inclusive programming to better meet the needs of people affected by humanitarian crises.

A. Climate action account

22. To enable the Fund to enhance support for people suffering the humanitarian consequences of climate change, the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator launched a climate action account at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in December 2023. The account is designed to attract new and additional financing to the Fund to address the ever-increasing humanitarian impacts of climate-related disasters worldwide. Such financing will allow the Fund to scale up climate-related humanitarian action through anticipatory action and responses. The account received strong donor support, with specific pledges made by Ireland, Latvia and Luxembourg.²

23. Contributions to the account are consolidated and attributed exclusively to the Fund's climate-related disaster portfolio, encompassing anticipatory action and responses. This assures donors that their additional climate finance contributions will be directed towards addressing the impact of climate-related disasters. The account's introduction is in line with the Fund's mandate to support life-saving humanitarian assistance and preserves its established needs-based decision-making processes and administrative and operational frameworks. The Fund's allocations will continue to be focused on meeting the most pressing humanitarian needs in an independent, impartial and neutral manner, and the Fund will continue to enable humanitarian partners to swiftly initiate relief efforts in response to, or in anticipation of, humanitarian disasters, whether caused by climate or other factors.

B. Anticipatory action

24. In 2023, the Fund continued to promote anticipatory responses to predictable humanitarian shocks, the majority of which are climate shocks. By the end of the year, the Fund had pre-committed funding for the development of 14 anticipatory action frameworks linked to droughts, floods, storms and disease outbreaks. In 2023, one anticipatory action framework, for a cholera outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was activated, through which the Fund granted \$750,000.

25. The Fund continued to ensure that dedicated learning activities were built into all allocations from anticipatory action frameworks.³ The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and its partners have developed a multidimensional learning

² More information about the account can be found at <https://cerf.un.org/document/cerf-climate-action-account-flyer>.

³ For the recent status of the anticipatory action frameworks, please refer to www.unocha.org/anticipatory-action. For more information about lessons learned see <https://cerf.un.org/anticipatory-action>.

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 funded anticipatory action during the 2021 drought in Ethiopia were released in 2023. Some 60 per cent of the more than 1,000 beneficiaries surveyed, or three in five respondents, reported improvements in their quality of life, stating that the funded assistance had increased their livelihood inputs and their ability to afford food and household bills. As a complement to the anticipatory action frameworks, the Fund continued to make early, forward-looking allocations that are intended to respond earlier to imminent crises on the basis of an analysis of risks and projections of needs. For example, in 2023 the Fund provided \$36 million for early action to get ahead of the impacts of flooding and droughts, including those driven by the El Niño phenomenon, assisting over 800,000 people across Madagascar, Somalia and Zimbabwe.

C. Localization and partnerships with non-governmental organizations

26. To achieve contextually appropriate and effective humanitarian responses, localization is essential. Although the Fund is mandated to provide grants specifically to entities of the United Nations, many of its grants are implemented in partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), host Governments and Red Cross and Red Crescent societies through subgrants. In 2023, the Emergency Relief Coordinator continued to encourage humanitarian country teams to organize dedicated consultations with national and local partners on the design of Fund allocations and to strengthen their engagement in the implementation of funding in the two underfunded emergencies allocation rounds. Humanitarian coordinators were encouraged to set ambitious targets for subgranting funding to local organizations, to consult with local organizations as implementing partners and to seek new local partnerships.

27. As a result, approximately 25 per cent of the funding allocated through the underfunded emergencies window was subgranted to national and local partners, compared with less than 15 per cent in previous years. In Haiti, for example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights used such funds to strengthen the work of seven community-based organizations, which, combined, assisted more than 2,000 survivors of violence.

28. Due to the Fund's grant and reporting cycle, the most recent year with a full record of data on subgrants is 2022. That year, a total of \$734.6 million was allocated by the Fund to United Nations humanitarian agencies.⁴ Of the \$734.6 million, \$144.2 million was subgranted by recipient United Nations entities to non-United Nations organizations, of which \$101.2 million went to national and local partners.⁵ Subgrants were allocated to 826 organizations, comprising 430 local and national NGOs receiving a total of \$62.8 million, 121 international NGOs receiving \$43 million, 256 government entities receiving \$33.1 million and 19 Red Cross and Red Crescent societies receiving \$5.4 million. The subgrants supported partnerships and a localized response and helped to expand the reach of funded humanitarian action.

⁴ Owing to the nature of the Fund's reporting cycle, comprehensive information on subgrants becomes available only a full year after the calendar year under review. Complete information on subgrants made under 2023 Fund allocations will be available only in early 2025.

⁵ This amount is based on input from grant reports covering 96 per cent of all 2022 grants. Reports covering the remaining grants are still pending submission to the Fund, owing mainly to no-cost extensions.

D. Promotion of effective, efficient and accountable programming

29. The Fund reinforces support for the people and groups most likely to bear the brunt of humanitarian crises, including women, children and persons with disabilities, through targeted innovative allocations and by mainstreaming support to those groups across all funding. Gender considerations, including gender-based violence, are mainstreamed in all stages of the Fund's programme cycle and have been further strengthened through revisions of templates and guidance. Disability considerations have similarly been mainstreamed within the programme cycle. The Fund requires recipient agencies to be guided by the gender and age marker when developing project proposals and to include in them gender-based violence considerations and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. In 2023, funding to the protection sector reached an estimated \$90.4 million, the highest ever annual amount. Of that amount, at least \$34.5 million went towards dedicated efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.⁶

30. In 2023, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs prepared for the launch in 2024 of the OneGMS pooled fund grant management platform for the Fund. The platform will enable the entire allocation process to be moved online, thereby improving transparency and enhancing real-time access to information, with templates standardized across the pooled funds. Once launched, the platform will allow for improved data analysis of indicators for high-risk groups, including by the gender, age and disability status of beneficiaries, and for strengthened tracking of funds allocated to local organizations, including women-led organizations.

31. The Fund promoted accountability to affected people in 2023 to ensure a more accountable humanitarian response in line with the commitments of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. This included demonstrating how the Fund's allocations supported or benefited from complaint and feedback mechanisms for affected people, referral systems, beneficiary surveys, focus group discussions, community engagement through text messaging or media broadcasting, and awareness-raising, including with regard to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. In the second underfunded emergencies round of 2023, a \$4.7 million envelope was dedicated to strengthening collective systems to empower affected people, especially women, girls and young people, to participate effectively in humanitarian decision-making processes in 10 countries. This allocation, which was the first of its kind, reinforces the Fund's ongoing commitment to accountability to affected populations.

32. Cash programming was an integral part of the effective and dignified humanitarian assistance supported by the Fund in 2023, with approximately 15 per cent of total funding (\$97.6 million) delivered as cash or vouchers to some 4 million people. Country teams are asked to consider such assistance as the default modality for funded responses in contexts where it is appropriate, as it strengthens the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and empowers affected people to make their own choices about what they need the most.

33. In 2023, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Germany convened a high-level round table with Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to help address the chronic shortfalls in funding to address gender-based violence and the persistent barriers facing women-led organizations in obtaining humanitarian funding. During the round table, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reaffirmed its commitment to explore possibilities for increasing access for women-led organizations to funding through its pooled funds and for increasing partnerships with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender

⁶ This amount is most likely an underestimation because it captures only interventions to combat gender-based violence that are clearly budgeted in funded projects.

Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to provide complementary support to women-led organizations. Notably, UNFPA received its second highest level of grants from the Fund to date, \$48.2 million, in 2023.

E. Evidence of strategic impact

34. When reporting on the use of funding at the end of the grant period, resident and humanitarian coordinators are asked to reflect on the achievement of the strategic objectives set out in the initial strategic vision and to assess how the allocation contributed to the achievement of the four overarching core objectives underpinning the Fund's design and mandate, namely, speed, timeliness, coherence and catalytic effect. The grant reports made available in 2023 revealed an exceptional level of positivity in the responses from resident and humanitarian coordinators, who stated that 100 per cent of the Fund's allocations had led to the fast delivery of assistance (for the rapid response window only) and had helped to respond to time-critical humanitarian needs and improve the coordination of humanitarian action. For instance, according to the Resident Coordinator for Türkiye, funding allocated in response to the 2023 earthquake in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic had enabled partners to play an important role in providing timely and effective assistance to those affected by the disaster. In addition, the allocation had served as a catalyst for further resource mobilization and had supported humanitarian coordination by bringing together a wide range of actors to address the urgent needs of the affected population. Resident and humanitarian coordinators also noted that 97 per cent of the Fund's allocations had helped to improve the mobilization of resources from other sources.

V. Management and administration of the Fund

A. Central Emergency Response Fund Advisory Group

35. In 2023, the Advisory Group continued to advise on the use and impact of the Fund and to play a significant role as advocates for the Fund. As part of the regular membership rotation, the Secretary-General appointed nine new members to the Advisory Group. Membership selection procedures are designed to ensure geographical and gender balance among the 19 members of the Group. In 2023, official Advisory Group meetings were held in January, June and December. Induction meetings for new members were also held in January and November.

36. During its official meetings in June and December, the Advisory Group commended the Fund for its increasingly central role in supporting the humanitarian system in responding to growing global humanitarian needs in a timely and coordinated manner. The Advisory Group expressed its continued commitment to the Fund's efforts to promote positive change in the humanitarian system through its innovative and catalytic approaches and reiterated its support for the Fund's anticipatory action efforts, encouraging their further mainstreaming. The Group also expressed support for a strengthened role for the Fund in the area of climate financing and commended the Fund for launching and garnering political and financial backing for the climate action account. In addition, the Group expressed support for the Fund's efforts to advance and promote locally led responses and to support the strengthening of collective accountability to affected populations. It reiterated its continued support for efforts to help reach the Fund's \$1 billion funding target agreed by Member States, including by expanding its donor base. The Group discussed the Fund's loan element with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and expressed support for exploring means

of increasing the flexibility of the loan facility to enhance its effectiveness in supporting critical humanitarian operations.

B. Transparency

37. During 2023, the Fund continued to enhance its transparency and accountability. Grant decisions are available in real time on the Fund's website and several other platforms, including the Financial Tracking Service, the Humanitarian Data Exchange and the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

38. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs further developed the Fund's data hub, which provides a wide array of interactive visuals, allowing stakeholders easy access to data on how funding has been allocated across global humanitarian operations. The data hub serves as a one-stop data visualization platform, providing data on allocations and donor contributions. The hub also offers historical information on allocations and makes it possible to view funding flows by region, country, partner and donor. In 2023, the Fund continued to refine its online management and transparency tools, including an online allocation tracker that provides real-time information on each of the Fund's allocations.

C. Risk management

39. The Fund continued to track and communicate information related to cases of potential fraud involving its funds in 2023. In keeping with its communication guidelines and standard operating procedures, the Fund secretariat continued to liaise with United Nations partners, the Fund's Advisory Group and donors regarding potential fraud cases associated with funded projects.

40. In 2023, partners provided updates on investigations into eight previously reported cases of possible fraudulent use of funds under projects using a Fund grant. Evidence gathered during recipient entity-led investigations showed that, in five of the eight cases, the allegations were not substantiated, and the cases were closed. For the three remaining cases, investigations are ongoing. A total of 10 new cases were reported by partners in 2023, 5 of which are ongoing, while the remaining 5 were closed because the allegations were not substantiated.

D. Independent reviews commissioned by the Fund

41. To assess the impact of the Fund, its secretariat commissions annual independent reviews of the contribution of the Fund to the humanitarian response in selected countries or thematic areas. The reviews are important stocktaking exercises for the Fund, helping to identify best practices, lessons learned and areas for improvement. They also provide relevant input for the broader humanitarian community, including lessons learned through Fund allocations.

42. In 2023, an external review of a disability envelope provided under the second underfunded emergencies round of 2021 was completed. This dedicated \$10 million envelope for seven countries was aimed at supporting interventions to address the specific requirements of persons with disabilities and to enhance the ability of humanitarian actors to develop and implement high-quality programmes that include persons with disabilities. The allocation was also aimed at promoting greater accountability in the humanitarian system, including by increasing and improving the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

43. The main objective of the review was to generate learning from the dedicated envelope, which was the first of its kind. In the review report, the need to address structural issues to enhance future initiatives was underscored. The report includes recommendations that added time be allowed for in-country consultations with technical experts and members of organizations of persons with disabilities during the development of allocation strategies and that improved processes be rolled out for the collection of data on disability. Since the review, the Fund has further mainstreamed disability considerations in all stages of the programme cycle, from strategy formulation to reporting, and has improved data collection across all its funding.⁷

44. In 2023, an independent evaluation of a \$25 million two-year global block grant allocated by the Fund in 2020 to address gender-based violence in 11 countries was commissioned by the recipient agencies, namely, UNFPA and UN-Women. The objective of the allocation had been to achieve measurable outcomes in the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence, the response to gender-based violence, the strengthening of the capacity and funding of women-led organizations and the inclusion of local responders in coordination structures at the country level. The allocation had been made at a crucial moment when gender-based violence needs were escalating globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting a unique opportunity to dedicate a substantial funding envelope to much-needed gender-based violence interventions.

45. In the evaluation, the positive impact of the grant, including on the efficiency of gender-based violence prevention and response measures, was emphasized, although results and approaches were found to vary between recipient countries. The evaluation also found that 40 per cent of the total block grant funding had been granted to women-led organizations, surpassing the initial 30 per cent target. The unique learning focus of the evaluation had resulted in actionable recommendations for addressing gender-based violence across the humanitarian community. Recommendations from the evaluation include the following: ensuring adequate additional funds for coordination mechanisms; building capacity to strengthen coordination and project delivery for women-led organizations; establishing systematic funding targets for women-led organizations; emphasizing the inclusion of gender-based violence in needs assessments conducted by humanitarian clusters; and ensuring that related funding needs are reflected in humanitarian response plans.⁸

VI. Funding levels and donor base of the Fund

A. Funding levels

46. As the gap between global humanitarian needs and available resources continues to expand, it is critical that the Fund reach the \$1 billion annual target endorsed by the General Assembly in 2016 to ensure that assistance is provided to those in need in an effective and coordinated manner. The Fund remains one of the fastest and most efficient ways to respond to urgent humanitarian needs and is a key global instrument for all Member States to demonstrate their solidarity with countries affected by crises.

47. In 2023, a year marked by financial instability, unfavourable exchange rates and an increasing humanitarian funding gap, the Fund's annual funding reached

⁷ The full review report is available at <https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/Review%20of%20CERF%20envelope%20for%20disability%20inclusion%20-%20Final.pdf>.

⁸ The evaluation report is available at https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/Final%20report_Evaluation%20of%20%20UNFPA%20_%20UN%20Women%20GBV%202-year%20Emergency%20Response%20Fund%20%28CERF%29%20Block%20Grant_18092023.docx.pdf.

\$558.5 million, representing the Fund's fifth highest annual funding level and a 9.1 per cent decrease from 2022 (\$611.9 million).

48. The 10 largest donors to the Fund during the year were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, which collectively provided 83.3 per cent of the Fund's 2023 income. The Fund thus continued to rely on a few donors for the majority of its funding. During the year, 16 Member States, namely, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, France, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America, increased their contributions in their original currencies from 2022. Two regional authorities, namely, the Basque Agency for Development Cooperation and the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation, also increased their contributions in their original currencies from 2022 (see more details in annex III).

49. In 2023, the Fund held multi-year agreements with 16 donors at a total annual value of more than \$402 million, accounting for 72 per cent of the overall annual income – on par with 2022. The Fund also received \$313.1 million, or 56.1 per cent of its overall annual income, by the first quarter of the year. This is an improvement compared with payments received in the same period in 2022 (\$243.3 million) and 2021 (\$208.3 million).

B. Diversifying and deepening the donor base

50. Since its inception in 2005, 133 Member States, as well as numerous observers and regional and local authorities, have contributed to the Fund. In 2023, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs engaged in fundraising activities to sustain, deepen and diversify the donor base of the Fund. The Office also regularly organized communication initiatives to enhance the visibility of the Fund and its donors, and to raise awareness of the Fund's added value to prospective donors. The Fund's donor base was successfully expanded in 2023, continuing the positive trend from past years. In total, 63 Member States and observers – up from 59 in 2022 – contributed to the Fund, as did three regional authorities and numerous private sector actors. The Fund also saw new donors and the return of former donors. Zambia contributed for the first time. The Fund welcomed the return of nine Member States that had previously contributed to the Fund, namely, Algeria, Armenia, Colombia, Greece, Latvia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. In 2023, the Office successfully strengthened partnerships with the Governments in the Gulf region. For example, Saudi Arabia contributed \$1 million to the Fund in 2023, its biggest contribution to date. The Office also continued to engage with key groups of Member States and in multilateral forums. For example, the Office worked with the Fund's Advisory Group members and donors in support of peer-to-peer advocacy. The Office also participated in European Union-related forums and mobilized contributions to the Fund from 24 of the 27 European Union member States during the year – up from 23 in 2022. The Office continued its efforts to expand and deepen partnerships with the private sector. Overall, the Fund received nearly \$2 million in contributions from the private sector, philanthropic actors and individuals, on par with the previous year.

51. To reach the \$1 billion annual funding target, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly continues to urge all Member States, regional authorities and private donors to provide new, additional and sustained contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund, in compliance with General Assembly resolution [71/127](#) and subsequent resolutions, the most recent of which is resolution [78/119](#).

Annex I

Total grants allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund, 1 January to 31 December 2023

(United States dollars)

<i>Country, territory or area</i>	<i>Rapid response window</i>	<i>Underfunded emergencies window</i>	<i>Total</i>
Afghanistan	33 009 981	20 650 017	53 659 998
Armenia	3 997 630	–	3 997 630
Bangladesh	10 000 000	8 000 000	18 000 000
Burkina Faso	9 010 873	9 641 844	18 652 717
Cameroon	–	6 350 000	6 350 000
Central African Republic	3 999 997	7 000 000	10 999 997
Chad	14 003 058	9 000 594	23 003 652
Colombia	–	6 525 950	6 525 950
Democratic Republic of the Congo	23 750 019	22 012 795	45 762 814
Djibouti	2 500 000	–	2 500 000
Egypt	5 800 103	–	5 800 103
Eritrea	–	5 002 073	5 002 073
Ethiopia	20 500 003	23 000 000	43 500 003
Haiti	17 989 406	8 300 000	26 289 406
Honduras	–	6 499 852	6 499 852
Islamic Republic of Iran	1 000 020	–	1 000 020
Kenya	–	8 001 346	8 001 346
Lebanon	–	8 000 000	8 000 000
Libya	10 000 000	–	10 000 000
Madagascar	4 000 000	8 499 950	12 499 950
Malawi	9 800 022	4 000 000	13 800 022
Mali	7 000 000	8 000 000	15 000 000
Mozambique	9 995 213	6 800 000	16 795 213
Myanmar	17 006 706	9 394 583	26 401 289
Nigeria	9 000 000	–	9 000 000
Pakistan	–	6 484 314	6 484 314
Panama	3 545 672	–	3 545 672
Peru	6 867 917	–	6 867 917
Rwanda	1 500 000	–	1 500 000
Somalia	28 000 009	–	28 000 009
South Sudan	34 000 009	–	34 000 009
Sudan	41 996 571	18 085 493	60 082 064
Syrian Arab Republic	15 000 000	25 000 000	40 000 000
Türkiye	10 200 241	–	10 200 241
Uganda	–	6 500 001	6 500 001
Vanuatu	2 763 281	–	2 763 281
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	–	8 245 002	8 245 002

<i>Country, territory or area</i>	<i>Rapid response window</i>	<i>Underfunded emergencies window</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yemen	18 000 658	20 000 269	38 000 927
Zimbabwe	5 996 059	–	5 996 059
Occupied Palestinian Territory	12 000 000	6 700 000	18 700 000
Total	392 233 448	275 694 083	667 927 531

Annex II

A. Central Emergency Response Fund grant element: statement of financial performance from 1 January to 31 December 2023^a

(United States dollars)

Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^b	251 048 887
Other transfers and allocations	849 723
Other revenue ^c	13 485 525
Investment revenue ^d	16 290 343
Total revenue	281 674 478
Expenses	
Grants and other transfers	686 969 291
Other operating expenses ^e	18 430 675
Total expenses	705 399 966
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(423 725 488)

B. Central Emergency Response Fund grant element: statement of changes in net assets from 1 January to 31 December 2023^a

(United States dollars)

	<i>Net assets</i>
Net assets as at 31 December 2022	1 047 698 136
Change in net assets	
Other adjustments to net assets	2 805 205
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(423 725 488)
Total changes in net assets	(420 920 282)
Net assets as at 31 December 2023	626 777 853

^a Statements were prepared in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

^b Represents voluntary contributions in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

^c Represents foreign exchange gain.

^d Includes net investment revenue of \$351,943 earned on the loan component of the Central Emergency Response Fund in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/119.

^e Includes programme support costs (United Nations) of \$18,403,761.

Annex III

Central Emergency Response Fund grant element: contributions for the year 2023

(United States dollars)

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>Pledged and received contributions^a</i>
Member States and observers	
Algeria	20 000
Andorra	10 942
Armenia	5 000
Australia	7 688 990
Austria	2 157 497
Azerbaijan	123 235
Bangladesh	25 000
Belgium	18 156 000
Bulgaria	16 466
Cambodia	30 000
Canada	22 166 931
China	425 000
Colombia	75 000
Croatia	100 000
Cyprus	100 000
Czechia	204 266
Denmark	31 295 088
Estonia	96 887
Finland	8 654 400
France	10 905 125
Germany	106 500 000
Greece	105 320
Guyana	2 158
Iceland	2 283 372
Indonesia	220 000
Ireland	15 399 460
Italy	16 570 500
Japan	97 080
Kuwait	1 000 000
Latvia	107 970
Liechtenstein	332 152
Luxembourg	5 968 000
Monaco	165 375
Mongolia	60 000
Montenegro	5 238
Morocco	100 000

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>Pledged and received contributions^a</i>
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	71 828 100
New Zealand	1 849 500
Norway	48 143 609
Peru	5 063
Philippines	200 000
Poland	120 000
Portugal	373 105
Qatar	1 000 000
Republic of Korea	7 000 000
Romania	108 189
Russian Federation	1 500 000
Saudi Arabia	1 000 000
Singapore	50 000
Slovakia	32 661
Slovenia	85 136
South Africa	278 950
Spain	3 188 098
Sweden	66 715 603
Switzerland	11 174 683
Thailand	20 000
Türkiye	450 000
Turkmenistan	50 000
United Arab Emirates	5 000 000
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	63 984 400
United States of America	19 532 839
Viet Nam	100 000
Zambia	10 000
Total, Member States and observers	554 972 388
Regional and local authorities	
Basque Agency for Development Cooperation (Spain)	264 781
Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (Spain)	646 653
Government of Flanders (Belgium)	660 780
Total, regional and local authorities	1 572 214
Others	
Baha'i International Community	20 000
Korean American Association of Greater New York/K-Radio	33 339
Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Ibrahim	1 000 000
Stripe, Ireland (United Nations Foundation)	678 602
Yoko Ono/Cultural Institute of Radical Contemporary Arts fundraiser	75 000

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>Pledged and received contributions^a</i>
Private donations through the United Nations Foundation (under \$10,000)	171 122
Private donations outside the United Nations Foundation (under \$10,000)	1 863
Total, others	1 979 926
Total	558 524 528

^a Contributions are actual amounts received, including certain unpaid pledges, for the year pledged by the donors and differ from the amount reported as revenue under the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Annex IV

Central Emergency Response Fund loan element: statement of changes in net assets from 1 January to 31 December 2023^a

(United States dollars)

	<i>Net assets</i>
Net assets as of 31 December 2022^b	30 000 000
Change in net assets	
Surplus for the year ^c	–
Total changes in net assets	–
Net assets as at 31 December 2023^{b,d}	30 000 000

^a Statements were prepared in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

^b Net asset of loan is set at \$30 million in accordance with General Assembly resolution [66/119](#).

^c Net investment revenue of \$351,943 was reflected in the grant element of the Central Emergency Response Fund in accordance with General Assembly resolution [66/119](#).

^d Comprises an outstanding loan of \$30 million.

Annex V

Central Emergency Response Fund loans from 1 January to 31 December 2023

(United States dollars)

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Country, territory or region</i>	<i>Year of disbursement</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Outstanding loans as at 1 January 2023			
UNRWA	Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Strip and West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem), Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon: critical and life-saving services, covering food needs for Palestine refugees	2022	20 000 000
UNRWA	Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Strip and West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem), Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon: critical and life-saving services, covering food needs for Palestine refugees	2022	10 000 000
Total			30 000 000
Loans disbursed from 1 January to 31 December 2023			
OCHA (SCHF)	Syrian Arab Republic: emergency relief in response to the earthquake	2023	10 000 000
UNDP	Yemen: FSO Safer project	2023	20 000 000
UNRWA	Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Strip and West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem), Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon: critical and life-saving services, covering food needs for Palestine refugees	2023	10 000 000
Total			40 000 000
Loans repaid from 1 January to 31 December 2023			
UNRWA	Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Strip and West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem), Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon: critical and life-saving services, covering food needs for Palestine refugees	2022	10 000 000
UNRWA	Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Strip and West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem), Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon: critical and life-saving services, covering food needs for Palestine refugees	2022	20 000 000
OCHA (SCHF)	Syrian Arab Republic: emergency relief in response to the earthquake	2023	10 000 000
Total			40 000 000
Outstanding loans as at 31 December 2023			
UNDP	Yemen: FSO Safer project	2023	20 000 000
UNRWA	Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Strip and West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem), Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon: critical and life-saving services, covering food needs for Palestine refugees	2023	10 000 000
Total			30 000 000

Abbreviations: OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; SCHF, Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.