



A fund
for all,
by all



Central Emergency Response Fund
High-level Pledging Event for 2022

United Nations
CERF | **15** YEARS OF
SAVING LIVES
TOGETHER

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Concept note

Last updated: 2 November 2021

Marking the 15th anniversary of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the High-level Pledging Event for 2022 will seek to galvanize greater commitments to the CERF to ensure it is fit to meet the increasing levels and complexity of humanitarian needs. The event will also offer an opportunity for the humanitarian community to respond to the Secretary-General's call for increased funding to CERF towards the \$1 billion annual target.

In particular, the Event will:

1. **Showcase CERF's results and unique added value** in delivering life-saving assistance and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, including its role in promoting fast, coordinated and effective responses, wherever and whenever crises hit. The Event will highlight CERF's global reach and comparative advantages for providing fast, agile and strategic allocations in complementarity with other funding sources. This will include the Fund's critical responses to climate-related emergencies, as well as CERF's important role as a driver of positive change throughout the humanitarian system.
2. **Provide an opportunity for donors to express global solidarity and announce pledges to CERF for 2022** to ensure that CERF can effectively respond to the growing humanitarian needs.

The event will be organized in two segments:

1. **Opening:** The session will include opening remarks by UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres, remarks by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Mr. Martin Griffiths, and a high-level panel that will

Date and venue

Wednesday, 8 December 2021
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (New York, EST)

Format: Hybrid (in-person & virtual)

In-person venue: Trusteeship Council Chamber

Registration

Kindly complete one form per delegation. Delegations may register a maximum of two delegates to attend, one of which may attend in person. Please also register one focal point to liaise with OCHA on technical and logistical aspects.

To register, please go to: <https://bit.ly/3B7sw8y>. The deadline to register is Tuesday, 30 November at 6 p.m. New York (EST).

Contacts

For more information you may visit the event webpage at: <https://bit.ly/3bllXU5>.

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

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focus on CERF's role in meeting the urgent lifesaving needs of people in crises and innovations driven forward in 2021.

- 2. Pledging:** This session will provide Member States and partners an opportunity to announce pledges to CERF for 2022 and potential top-ups for 2021. USG/ERC Griffiths will chair this session.

Participants

Member States and Observer Missions, UN agencies and partners are invited to the Event.

Event Details

The Event will take place on **Wednesday, 8 December 2021 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. New York (EST)**. It will take place in a hybrid format, and Member States are invited to participate at the Ministerial level. The Event will be held in English with interpretation available in the six official UN languages.

Delegations may register a maximum of two delegates to attend, one of which may attend in person. Please also register one focal point to liaise with OCHA on technical and logistical aspects (e.g. virtual platform testing, coordinating in-person attendance). We will do our best to accommodate requests for in-person attendance at the event; however, the venue capacity is subject to change due to evolving UN COVID-19 guidance. Due to the capacity limit of the room, in-person participation will be on a 'first come first serve' basis, per registration time. More information regarding the format and technical requirements of the meeting will be shared with registered participants and posted on the event webpage.

CERF Achievements in 2021

In 2021, weather events, conflicts, disease outbreaks and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to contribute to high levels of humanitarian needs. Recognizing the need for a strong CERF response, donor contributions had reached \$512 million by September 2021, enabling the Fund to deliver life-saving assistance to millions of people in 30 countries.

In 2021, several countries were struck by new emergencies while others witnessed deteriorating humanitarian conditions that required support from the CERF Rapid Response window. Using CERF's fast-track procedures, the most urgent grants in 2021 were processed in less than two working days, often making CERF the first funding source in new emergencies. The Fund's speed was for example demonstrated in response to the devastating fire that tore through the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in March—in less than 48 hours, the Fund released \$14 million to provide urgent shelter and other assistance to tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees. Throughout the year, CERF also continued to showcase its instrumental role in enabling time-critical responses to humanitarian crises. This was demonstrated in response to the escalating conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia where in December 2020, the USG/ERC approved a time-critical CERF allocation of \$13 million following an escalation of the conflict. Another \$15 million was released from CERF in June to assist the most affected communities in the region following improved access for humanitarian operations.

Support from the Rapid Response window was also instrumental in responding to the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. At the beginning of 2021, over 18 million people—almost half of the country's population—needed humanitarian assistance. During the first six months of the year, an additional 550,000 people were forced into displacement. To respond to the fast-evolving context, CERF has allocated over \$90 million to humanitarian responses in the country during 2021, including \$20 million in August from the Rapid Response window to enable the Afghanistan country team to "stay and deliver" and maintain and scale up the humanitarian response. In September, CERF released another \$45 million from the Rapid Response window to prevent the collapse of the country's health-care system and ensure continued provision of life-saving health services.

The year was also marked by the impacts of extreme climate events and a rising number of natural disasters that exacerbated chronic vulnerabilities and food insecurity. In some countries, this was further aggravated by unrest and conflict contributing to catastrophic levels of food insecurity. To help stave off potential famine in high-risk countries, in early 2021 CERF disbursed \$80 million to Afghanistan,

Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, helping to save the lives of millions of people and protect livelihoods.

CERF funds continued to drive innovation in anticipatory humanitarian action ahead of predictable climate-related humanitarian shocks. In Somalia, CERF allocated \$20 million to mitigate and prevent the impacts of a forecasted severe drought, thereby ensuring a faster, less expensive, and more dignified response. In total, CERF is supporting Anticipatory Action pilots in eleven countries and is exploring options to further integrate anticipatory approaches into the Fund.

During the year, CERF continued to be a lifeline for people caught in crises that do not attract sufficient donor attention but where needs remain critical. Through the first allocation of the year from the Underfunded Emergencies window, CERF provided a total of \$135 million to 12 underfunded and neglected crises, providing life-saving assistance to an estimated 9.7 million people. This included a \$22 million allocation to Syria to ensure life-saving support to over 13 million people impacted by the effects of ongoing conflict, severe water shortages, rising food insecurity, and the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Underfunded Emergencies window, CERF also provided a \$12.5 million allocation to South Sudan to ensure education services and protection to over 200,000 children and women impacted by the protracted conflict, COVID-19 pandemic and flooding which have devastated the country's education system.

Using innovative approaches, CERF continued to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable and through targeted allocations helped ensure that humanitarian support reached particularly vulnerable people, including those with specific needs that often are neglected. During the COVID-19 pandemic, gender-based violence in humanitarian crises saw a dramatic increase. This called for flexible and innovative CERF allocations, and in November 2020, CERF dedicated a portion of the Fund's support to underfunded and neglected crises to address gender-based violence. This was followed by another \$25 million allocation to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women in early 2021 in response to gender-based violence in 11 countries. Over 30 per cent of this funding was in support of local women-led and women's right organizations. Following the positive experience of targeting funding for gender-based violence, in 2021 CERF dedicated \$10 million of its \$135 million underfunded allocation to support transformative interventions to help address the specific barriers and needs of people living with disabilities in humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, DRC, Nigeria, Mozambique, South Sudan, Syria and Venezuela.

Background

Established in 2006, the CERF has allocated over \$7.2 billion to provide life-saving assistance for millions of people in over 110 countries and territories. Since CERF was established, global funding needs through humanitarian appeals have increased sevenfold—from \$5.2 billion in 2006 to assist 32 million people to some \$36 billion in 2021 to support over 161 million people in need. In 2016, the General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General's call to more than double CERF's annual funding target to \$1 billion, reflecting the increasing humanitarian needs and Member States' confidence in CERF. Since its inception, CERF has received contributions from 130 Member States, including 59 that have also benefited from CERF funding – a testament to the world's collective commitment to CERF as a “fund for all, by all”.