Key Issues for a Resource Mobilisation Strategy Achieving the Annual Target of $1 billion

Discussion Paper

The paper will be discussed at the CERF Advisory Group Meeting on the 24th-25th of October 2017. A review of Lessons Learnt from Successful Global Replenishments will also contribute to the discussions in the session. A strategy will be finalized after discussions at the CERF Advisory Group meeting. On this basis, the strategy will be translated into yearly plans further developing the Strategic and Immediate Actions outlined separately.
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I. **Background:**

Established in 2006 in the United Nations General Assembly as a ‘fund for all, by all’, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is the United Nation’s global emergency response fund. With a track record of more than 10 years, CERF is known as a fast and flexible funding tool enabling frontline humanitarian partners to kick-start urgent response in sudden onset or protracted crises. However, since CERF was established, humanitarian crises have increased in scale, complexity and duration. In the last ten years, the number of people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance has grown from 32 million to 141 million, with global humanitarian needs quadrupling from $5.2 billion to over $22 billion in 2017. The share of CERF’s current funding target against the global requirements has declined from 8.7 to 1.9 per cent, where the present level of CERF at $450 million a year has not kept pace with the growing scale of needs. Against this context, the UN Secretary General in 2016 recommended an expansion of CERF to $1 billion by 2018. This was endorsed by the UN General Assembly (GA) in late 2016 where the GA resolution called upon all Member States, and invited the private sector and all concerned individuals and institutions, to consider increasing their voluntary contributions to the fund, emphasizing the need to broaden and diversify the income base.

The goal to meet the expanded target of $1 billion comes in a challenging resource mobilization context with donor ODA remaining largely unchanged. In addition, the surge of populist sentiments in key donor countries in Europe and the US signals increasing challenges for international aid including significant cuts. At the same time, the world has mobilized around global themes such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate change, migration among others which coupled with the unprecedented needs for humanitarian financing implies a highly competitive resources mobilization landscape. An increased tendency to earmark funding especially for specific humanitarian crises further challenges the positioning of CERF as a global un-earmarked funding tool. As with most entities, exchange rate fluctuations further undermine contributions considering CERF’s heavy reliance on non-US dollar contributions. In this competitive landscape, a clear alignment of overall strategy, delivery, capacity and expertise is important to CERF as the only global emergency response fund. Reinforcing CERF as a clear leader in humanitarian financing – unmatched in its global reach, speed and effectiveness - is critical to generate the resources required, going beyond standard donor engagement.

While CERF has significantly enhanced efforts to maintain current levels of funding, the doubling of the target calls for critical shifts to redefine the lines of engagement and trigger the breakthroughs required to meet this ambitious target. The strategic emphasis such as leadership initiatives with core partners and innovative finance focusing on disaster risk insurance have the potential to diversify CERF’s revenue streams and pursue some new funding sources for CERF. Therefore, the success of CERF is key to demonstrate the leadership of OCHA in humanitarian financing, especially through the mobilization and leveraging of resources to enhance predictable, timely and effective humanitarian response. Central to this are the changes in CERF to address the challenges in the humanitarian system.

II. **Process:**

In the context of the SG’s recommendation to double CERF to $1 billion, the CERF secretariat shared a paper with the CERF Advisory Group in March 2016 to establish the Building Blocks for an Advocacy and Engagement Strategy vital to mobilise resources towards a $1 billion. Subsequently, an updated paper was shared with the CERF Advisory Group in May 2017 which further prioritised and reinforced the elements critical to continuing laying the groundwork to move towards an annual target of $1 billion. In the meantime, CERF also conducted a donor survey in 2017 to identify key issues and priorities to promote the positioning of CERF with partners.

This document further recaptures key elements while outlining the overarching goal, priority areas, strategic and immediate actions to facilitate the move towards the achievement of $1 billion. This will be further updated based
on discussions with CERF Advisory group members as well as key partners. An update on key actions in 2017 is also provided to set the base for progress and challenges.

III. Goal:

A shift from a $450 million fund to a $1 billion fund entails a phased approach, with clear objectives to help set and reinforce the foundation to achieve the ambitious target in a challenging resource mobilization context. Engaging with key partners to collectively define the objectives and success factors is vital to promote the ownership and commitment required to achieve the objectives and ensure success. Central to the outreach on the expanded target is the need to elaborate the difference that CERF will make and what would be done differently that makes CERF a reliable tool to promote predictable, timely and efficient response to humanitarian crises.

The overarching goal of the strategy: As a global ‘fund for all, by all’, mobilize and expand the partnerships required to generate additional and sustainable resources to meet the expanded target of $1 billion.

A corollary to this is an increase in predictable, multi-year partnerships as well as a shift to a business model that secures significant resources through financing options that go beyond traditional grants. Of importance is the pioneering role of CERF in strengthening the leadership of OCHA on humanitarian financing.

IV. Priority Areas:

1. Success factors, targets, benchmarks and timelines defined to achieve the $1 billion

A move towards the $1 billion will be sequential and phased. Establishing the blocks and strengthening the foundation for enhanced advocacy and engagement towards the mobilization of $1 billion is important to ensure a successful transition towards achieving the new target. In addition to the current transition phase (2017), phases to be discussed are as follows:

- Bridge Phase
- Ultimate Year to achieve the $1 billion

**Transition Phase:** 2017 has been a transition year for CERF, with two critical objectives: Achieve or surpass the 2017 target; set the building blocks to make the shift towards $1 billion. CERF is projected to reach the 2017 target, which is a significant achievement reinforcing the pitch for a $1 billion CERF. Falling short for a third consecutive year would have significantly undermined the credibility of CERF in moving towards the ambitious target. CERF meeting the annual target for 2017 – especially significant additional contributions from core donors - is a testament to their confidence in CERF to address the significant global humanitarian challenges. In 2017, CERF has been working with partners to lay the critical building blocks to set and secure the foundation for enhanced advocacy and engagement to move towards the expanded target of $1 billion. These include: mobilising and leveraging UN Leadership; enhancing Member State engagement emphasizing partnership with core donors including through leadership initiatives; enhancing visibility and communications; identifying priority member States for engagement to mobilise additional funding; progress on innovative finance through the development of the disaster risk insurance and identification of expertise to facilitate the mobilisation of private sector fundraising. While progress has been made across all the priority areas, significant progress to reinforce the breadth and depth of engagement remains critical to position CERF at the level vital to double the resources especially moving into the bridge period.

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1 It took CERF three years to achieve the target of $450 million. In addition, the global funds have a replenishment strategy of at least two years before the pledging conference.
**Bridge Period:** A minimum bridge period of two years (if not three\(^2\)) is required to develop and implement a targeted strategy to mobilise $1 billion for the first time. This should build on the achievements of each phase and address the challenges of the current transition period to promote a targeted approach that delivers maximum results in mobilizing the partnerships and volume of resources required. This is also critical to drive the narrative of success to foster confidence among partners to catalyse and incentivize additional resources.

The upcoming **High-Level Pledging Conference (HLC)** for 2018 in December is a critical milestone for CERF – the first one framed in the context of the expanded target of $1 billion. It will signify the support of partners to CERF and towards the expanded target of $1 billion. As a pledging conference, the objective is to mobilise commitment towards meeting the annual target of the fund. While CERF will not meet the target of $1 billion by 2018, it is important that the HLC for 2018 signifies a ‘pivot’ point for CERF - demonstrating concrete shifts in moving towards the target of $1 billion. Defining the success and overall narrative for the HLC and beyond with partners is important to ensure a successful start that will boost the credibility of the fund and set the tone for the coming year in mobilising the partnerships required. *(See Key Issues for the CERF High Level Pledging Conference 2018)*

2. **Deepen and Diversify Partnerships to Generate Additional and Sustainable Funding**

**Member States** are key partners and the priority for overall advocacy and engagement for CERF. Member States have contributed 99.8% of CERF’s funding since 2006. Of the 193 Member States of the UN General Assembly, 126 Member States and Observers have contributed to CERF. For those Member States who have given to CERF in the past, 40 have not contributed in the past five years and 69 Member States have never contributed to CERF.

While CERF will seek to significantly enhance and accelerate outreach to all Member States of the General Assembly (through regional groupings and general member state engagement), it will also target key Member States to mobilise the political and financial resources required to strengthen the global visibility of CERF especially as a global solidarity fund ‘by all, for all’.

Engagement with Member States will be further tailored accordingly as outlined below.

a) **Member States who are among CERF’s core donors** with the potential and interest to lead CERF specific initiatives to mobilise global political commitment while also contributing additional resources to CERF. E.g., the engagement of the UK and Netherlands on the risk insurance initiative for CERF; Sweden on the Fairsharing Initiative. The emphasis is to mobilize and leverage their strategic, technical and financial capacities to drive initiatives that expand the partnerships and resources for CERF.

b) **Member States who are not among CERF’s traditional or core donors** and have the potential to increase contributions to CERF in the future\(^3\) as part of the priority group of Member States. These include a mix of OECD DAC countries as well as others:

1. Potential for significant increases in the long term: China, France*, Japan, US
2. Potential for significant increase in the medium term: Austria*, Australia, Italy, Spain
3. Potential for increases in the medium term: Qatar, KSA, Kuwait, UAE

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\(^3\) The potential range of contributions is from $5 million to $50 million a year.

*Member States who have stopped contributing to CERF.*
c) **Member States among the G20** who consistently contribute to CERF and have the potential to mobilize regional/geographic partnerships including through their role in global leadership platforms: Argentina, Mexico, Russia, India, Indonesia, Turkey, South Africa.

Additional groupings for engagement include:

d) **Member States who are among small OECD DAC** countries with significant increases in ODA, including regional governments and entities. These include: Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland and regional entities in Europe.

e) **Member States who are recipients of CERF funding** - including those who are both recipients and donors to CERF (47 Member States) - with the potential to advocate for CERF in regional and global partnership platforms. These are: Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Philippines, Chile among others.

**Private and Corporate Sector Partnerships** will be critical to move towards the ambitious target of $1 billion. However, private sector contributions have been less than 0.14% for CERF. This also reflects lack of dedicated capacity in CERF vital to mobilize funds from the private sector. CERF will work with experts to find a ‘niche’ that works for its specific model. Partnerships with private sector will include funding but also services of benefit to CERF. E.g., expertise to facilitate digital payments. Initiatives to capitalise on corporates, high net worth individuals and philanthropies including through gifts and legacies are an untapped source of funding, where CERF will rely on the guidance of experts and influencers with the access and networks to promote CERF. Leveraging the support of core government partners around key initiatives such as innovative financing covering risk insurance, social impact investments, blended finance will be pursued to catalyse additional funding to complement the donor base through public-private partnerships. In addition, other potential areas of demonstrated success on public-private partnerships include match funding campaigns and mechanisms.

**Special categories:** While the engagement of Member States and private sector partners are important, the regional institutions like the European Commission could be explored as it is also a major donor to key global funds which are pooled funding mechanisms. CERF does not received funding from the EU due to legal Project Support Costs (PSC) related constraints in the Commission. At the same time, the recent examples of EU support to the UN joint programmes and pooled funding modalities including the Multi Partner Trust Fund could provide relevant insights into the potential for EU funding.

3. **Secure Global Political Leadership to Promote Greater Engagement on CERF**

**Mobilising the authority of senior UN leaders:** Considering the record high humanitarian needs coupled with other financing challenges faced by the UN, it is imperative that the call to double the CERF has the highest level of support. A ‘stand-out’ feature across all successful major global fundraising drivers is the role and ownership of senior leaders in their advocacy and engagement towards the cause. High level advocacy and championship by the Secretary-General (SG) remains critical to mobilise the global political leadership required to double the CERF. The SG’s access to world leaders, his global authority and his role in the oversight of CERF as a ‘fund for all, by all’ established in the GA are unique assets for the global positioning of CERF. In particular, priority countries for engagement

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4 Nigeria pledged $10 million to the Global Fund in 2017 and $15 million to IDA 18.
6 According to the Economist, Capgemini reported that the global number of high-net-worth individuals grew by 7.5% - the highest ever.
require the advocacy from the SG and senior UN leaders to facilitate responsive actions in terms of contributions to CERF. While advocacy for CERF should be part of relevant outreach to Member States, CERF specific engagements are also important on their own. E.g., a high level event on CERF around the General Assembly in September.

In tandem, the leadership of the Emergency Relief Co-coordinator (ERC) and the Deputy Emergency Co-ordinator (DERC) – their consistent advocacy for CERF - is pivotal to expand and reinforce the global visibility of CERF. In addition, the advocacy by key UN agency heads complements and reinforces the global case of support for CERF as part of a ‘systems approach’ that emphasises the added value of the UN in fast, timely and co-ordinated humanitarian response. Anchored in the leadership of the SG/ERC, the President of the General Assembly (GA) is an asset and could further rally Member States around their shared commitment to the fund with potential links to mobilise the support from the Presidents of the ECOSOC and the Security Council in light of the ‘unifying’ mandate of CERF across groups of Member States. Building on the experience of 2017, CERF is consulting with the SG’s Office, the ERC’s Office and key partners to develop a strategic engagement plan to expand high level outreach to include CERF specific engagements critical to financing humanitarian aid. This should also include a more systematic outreach to partners beyond the regular ‘beat’ to include parliamentarians, finance ministers and others decision-makers to mobilise the ambitious scale of partnerships required to move towards a $1 billion target.

Identifying Global Champions for CERF: The history and experience behind the establishment of CERF, as well as other global funds, reinforce the importance of high level champions – representing governments, businesses, civil society, private sector or entertainment – in rallying political and public commitment towards global priorities. E.g., Bill Gates on global health especially GAVI and polio, Gordon Brown for education, Bono for the global fund among others. In addition, the advocacy by key leaders from CERF recipient countries is important to reinforce the impact of CERF on the ground. While CERF has mobilised the support of key ministers for CERF pledging conferences and other global events, a $1 billion annual target requires a more robust and engaged approach where CERF will consult with key partners to identify and leverage the role of champions with the credibility for high level advocacy for CERF, especially peer to peer advocacy. E.g., Germany is among the top supporters of a $1 billion CERF as expressed by Chancellor Merkel at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. CERF will explore the possibility of similar high level leadership by champion leaders to mobilise global support for CERF. The emphasis is not on ‘one off’ events but a more strategic approach across global milestones to set the tone and momentum towards successful outcomes resulting in increased partnerships and resources for CERF.

Champions from the private sector are also vital to drive and leverage the partnerships required to enhance the funding base to CERF. However, the limited engagement of global business leaders on humanitarian issues in comparison to development or climate change significantly reduces the opportunity. These business leaders also leverage their networks and resources to incentivise others to engage, further expanding the reach and engagement. A network of business leaders similar to the Global Business Council for Education (for the Education Cannot Wait Fund and the Global Partnership for Education) or the SDG investing group (SDGI) comprised of 18 asset managers from Dutch financial institutions (including the largest pension investors) provides interesting examples for similar initiatives for CERF.

“The German government will moreover further expand its support of the UN CERF which remains an indispensable instrument for responding to humanitarian crises worldwide and together with other donors, we will campaign for a substantial increase in CERF funds.”

Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germany in response to the SG’s Letter to Member States to support famine response; 2017
An area of emphasis is the support from civil society partners, especially civil society networks in key priority countries. So far, civil society organisations and networks have not been fully supportive of an expanded CERF as they are not direct recipients of CERF funding. In 2017, the Irish government provided additional contribution to CERF and CONCERN released a press release welcoming this from the Irish government. This is a unique example but highlights the type of advocacy from civil society partners that would be useful to CERF, especially in key donor countries.

**Promote CERF in global leadership priorities, events and outcomes:** Commitment to double the CERF target should be reflected in key global outcomes – either linked to inter-governmental processes or multi-stakeholder consultations. Key partners have noted the importance of CERF in high level events on crises. E.g., CERF’s critical role in kick starting early response was highlighted by key donors at the Yemen pledging conference, Lake Chad Pledging Conference, Meeting on Famine Countries among others. In addition, many core CERF partners lead multi-partner leadership initiatives – new way of working, grand bargain among other rallying themes. The role of key Member States in promoting CERF is vital to ensure that the support for CERF is reflected in global and inter-governmental commitments and outcomes, including in General Assembly resolutions among others. For this, CERF will continue to scan key global opportunities and improve the proactive, tailored and timely dissemination of key advocacy and communication tools to support partners' advocacy on CERF.

While humanitarian forums are important, global leadership platforms such as the G7 and G20 are key opportunities to secure ambitious commitments from global leaders that have fuelled breakthroughs around development and financing. E.g., GAVI, Global Fund, concessional financing by the World Bank, Global Partnership on Education. Driven by high level UN leadership, CERF will engage with key partners to explore the opportunities of global leadership forums to mobilise the political buy-in and ownership towards reaching $1 billion.

4. **Maximising the Effectiveness of a Pledging Process**

**Re-envisioning the CERF Pledging Conference and other milestones:** Successful resource mobilisation initiatives as reflected in the replenishment drives of the World Bank, the global funds all highlight the structured nature of advocacy and engagement around key global milestones. A series of global events set the tone and direction in mobilising partnerships and securing commitment to ambitious funding targets, with an uptick towards the final year leading up to the replenishment. While CERF has a series of events in the year linked to (two Member State briefings, ECOSOC event, HLC), these are usually one-off events, with a lot more potential to be linked as part of a strategic narrative to frame CERF as a $1 billion global fund.

**The timing and format of the CERF Annual Pledging Conference** should be reviewed to maximize political commitment and resources to CERF. The new target is an opportunity to address the following:

- Shift to a multi-year pledging conference: An annual Pledging Conference for $1 billion versus a multi-year pledging conference for $3 billion for three years (or $5 billion for five years). This should work with the budget cycles of donors at a minimum. However, a multi-year approach would also help address the core issue of predictably important for humanitarian financing.

- Reviewing the format of the high level Pledging Conferences to reflect best practices in terms of successful pledging conferences. E.g., Chancellor Angela Merkel and GAVI replenishment; Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Global Fund replenishment.
• Sequencing of key global milestones to ensure a structured and orchestrated approach towards the Pledging Conference.

5. Cross-cutting Drivers:

Strengthened Analytics: Up to date analysis of donor trends, priorities, policy changes, budget cycles and other key factors such as political changes is vital to craft effective advocacy and engagement strategies. Understanding the decision-making landscape for priority Member States and their perception of CERF is important considering the general absence of data and analysis but also the limited engagement currently to provide the intelligence required. While the 2017 CERF donor survey was a good start, additional information is vital specially to target advocacy for priority countries.

Telling the Story of CERF: Combining both evidence and human interest angles in a compelling and consistent way is important to amplify the global visibility of CERF in a crowded messaging landscape. As noted by key partners, CERF has stepped up its communications promoting the visibility of the fund with internal and external partners. However additional efforts to convey the role of CERF concretely in terms of areas of action and results achieved such as beneficiaries, thematic (health, water, food, etc) and geographic results, reinforcing its core features (speed, flexibility, neutrality) while also its ‘added value’ (humanitarian leadership) should be exponentially expanded in terms of frequency of communication and formats to address the significant visibility challenge that constrains CERF. Based on best in class practice, CERF will endeavor to drive key changes to tell its stories in a more compelling, timely and relevant way. Specific features on donor priorities will be developed to showcase results and CERF’s added value and be translated in key languages. CERF’s digital and social media platforms will be further strengthened to enhance public outreach and engagement building on a good digital outreach platform7.

In addition, a compelling public communications campaign is vital to complement any high level political campaign to generate the commitment towards a $1 billion CERF. This also makes the issues more attractive to political leadership. E.g., ‘End it in a generation’ campaign for the last replenishment of the Global Fund or a feature in the September Global Citizen’s Concert. A ‘global campaign’ linked to CERF will rely on external expertise to guide the strategic and technical requirements that underpin successful marketing approaches.

Donor visibility is a key priority for CERF. Challenging domestic environments, especially for traditional donors, call for raising the profile of CERF, its effectiveness and added value, to help justify the fund as the priority choice for humanitarian assistance, especially considering trade-offs with internal domestic priorities. Promoting the visibility of CERF and donor support to CERF are important areas to help donors ‘make the case’ for CERF in resource-tight environments under high public scrutiny. CERF will explore and maximize various opportunities to systematically promote donor visibility, including through high level events, flagship publications, multimedia especially digital and social media outreach emphasizing CERF supported results. An important initiative is attributing donor results and CERF will provide specific results data linked to donor contributions.

7 CERF has a growing audience base on Twitter (close to 80.00 followers), 1000 visitors per week on Facebook and website traffic of a 1000 viewers per week (more than 50% new viewers).
6. Special Initiatives to Diversify Partnerships and Funding:

Innovative Financing:

While Member States are, and will be the core contributors to CERF, alternative funding sources are also vital to complement the income base. As a global fund that was a financial innovation when it was established, it is imperative that CERF adapts to the context and maintains its role at the forefront of change for the benefit of the humanitarian community. Exploring a more ‘financing’ approach that harnesses the potential of market and private sector practices to generate additional income would be useful to complement and secure a part of the funding base and introduce a more sustainable financial perspective to the business model that fully relies on grants from the top donors.

Innovative finance is a dynamic area with a range of instruments and partnerships that has the potential for additional, predictable and sustainable income. It could also be a ‘pull’ factor for those Member States and private sector partners who are interested to go beyond traditional grants in their engagement. Based on a review of potential options on innovative financing for CERF, the immediate focus has been on developing a disaster risk insurance based initiative financed by a premium fund. This is a small but significant step in exploring alternatives to complement the donor base. Success in this will generate further confidence and expertise to explore other initiatives. Depending on the overall vision of humanitarian financing in OCHA, capitalising on innovative finance to incorporate a more ‘financing’ angle to raise funds is a unique opportunity that has proven its worth for other global funds. The importance is to find the right initiatives adapted for CERF’s unique model based on a review of good practices that have benefited global funding mechanisms. By its very nature and emphasis on ‘innovation’, innovative financing will entail risks where political support and risk management are important to promote the breakthroughs required while also staying aligned to operational regulations.

Fairsharing Initiative:

The CERF Advisory Group in October 2016 discussed the development of ‘fair sharing’ initiatives that could encourage a wide range of partners to contribute voluntarily to CERF in line with their economic capability as an expression of solidarity towards meeting global humanitarian needs. This was further discussed at the May 2017 meeting. This is a highly political initiative and requires a sound basis of data and analysis as well as broad-based partnerships to review it as a potential initiative for CERF. As a general approach, CERF will explore specific initiatives to galvanise the wider membership of the General Assembly in support of CERF as a global solidarity fund that secures the engagement of the maximum number of Member States.

Private Fund Raising Initiative:

An initiative is under development to mobilise private donor investments in CERF with a $500 million goal. This initiative will be centred on meaningful and enhanced engagements with private donors, with the primary goal of identifying, cultivating, and securing significant financial and other contributions from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other non-state actors.
7. Enabling Actions:

**Engagement of the CERF Advisory Group:**

The CERF Advisory Group (AG) is important for the oversight and management of the fund. Its guidance is particularly important as CERF transitions towards the goal of $1 billion. Looking ahead, the composition of the AG, the nomination of new members in 2017 and the leadership and advocacy role of key members are all critical in helping CERF strengthen its global position as a critical financing tool for the humanitarian community. CERF will be more proactive in the engagement with AG members, supporting the advocacy role of AG members on CERF while also enhancing regular and timely sharing of information on key CERF actions.

In addition, to reflect the broader partnerships important to position CERF as the global emergency fund, the membership of the CERF AG will be gradually expanded from 18 to 28 to promote a more diverse and inclusive group of expertise.

**Investing in People and Processes:**

The ambition and scope outlined in the strategy requires significant investment in people and processes to enable the successful implementation of the strategy. The expertise and capacities required to implement this go beyond the standard profiles of humanitarian affairs officers. Experience in inter-governmental affairs, innovative financing or replenishment style resource mobilisation provide useful areas to help the implementation of the strategy. Dedicated capacity to ensure the full implementation of the strategy is vital to reinforce the gains and accelerate. Options such as secondments from priority countries (e.g., China) could also be considered to provide expertise to explore new partnerships.

Processes and systems to support to expand the scale of actions and also implement innovative initiatives will require flexibility in operational rules.