

\$1 Billion CERF: Building Blocks for an Advocacy and Engagement Strategy

15 March 2016



I. Background:

The Secretary General's Report on the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) sets a clear vision on the future of CERF and recommends the expansion of the CERF annual target to \$1 billion by 2018 – currently at \$450 million. This reaffirms the centrality of CERF in the humanitarian financing architecture and its importance to meet the rising humanitarian needs with speed, flexibility and impact vital to save lives and protect people. The following outlines key building blocks of an advocacy and engagement strategy to drive the commitment and support required to translate the vision of a bigger CERF into reality. This complements the paper on “Potential Advantages of a Bigger CERF” shared as part of the meeting.

In particular, the discussion on the expansion of the CERF target raises two key issues:

- As a General Assembly (GA) established fund, the expansion of the CERF target and any related changes will have implications for engagement with the GA. Expanding and building broad-based political support especially among all GA members is central to this.
- While setting the new target is important, ensuring that it can be met is equally important, which requires redoubled efforts to explore additional funding sources to complement and shore up the existing funding base.

II. Building Blocks:

Three key areas have been identified to establish the basic building blocks for a plan of action.

1. **Building Block One: To capitalise on and leverage broad-based political commitment to mobilise support to the \$1 billion CERF:**

A multitude of stakeholders – Member States, UN agencies and private sector play a crucial role to support the new target and ensure that it can be reached. These efforts require engagement across multiple fronts to build the partnerships and drive the momentum and support required. Key priorities include:

- a. **Leverage the voice and visibility of senior leaders in the UN:** High level advocacy by the Secretary General (SG) and Emergency Relief Co-coordinator (ERC) as well as UN agency heads is vital to 'make the case' for an expanded CERF as a key game-changer on humanitarian financing. The CERF High Level Conference (HLC) in December 2015 demonstrated the support and engagement of top UN leaders to CERF. In addition, the communications around the HLC and the SG's announcement of CERF's \$100 million allocation for underfunded crises in particular has further reinforced the role of CERF as the UN's global response fund. The messaging around the SG's humanitarian journey in the lead-up to the WHS has been key opportunity to highlight CERF. However, looking ahead at 2016 and 2017, a more strategic engagement plan is vital to promote the high level leadership and advocacy required – leveraging reach and access to key decision makers critical to the success of an expanded CERF target. In addition, the support of key UN

agencies is also important to reinforce the value of CERF and promote its global reputation as among the first line of support to help agencies deliver results in emergencies.

- b. **Anchor CERF target in global outcomes:** Commitment to increase the CERF target should be reinforced in key global outcomes – linked to inter-governmental processes or multi-stakeholder initiatives. The immediate milestone is the WHS in May to promote the commitment of Member States and other partners to the SG’s recommendation of a bigger CERF. In addition, upcoming opportunities in 2016 such as the ECOSOC in June, General Assembly related processes in September, as well as the December omnibus resolution, among others, are unique opportunities to further reinforce the political commitment to the new target. Support of key Member States will be crucial to drive the required outcomes linked to these various processes.
- c. **Identify global champions for CERF** including Member States and other key global personalities: The history and experience of the establishment of CERF itself as well as other global funds reinforce the importance of high level champions across a cross section of global influencers and opinion makers across government and public. E.g., Bill Gates for health especially GAVI and polio. In terms of Member States, Germany and Sweden have already expressed support for a bigger CERF and could be among key government leaders to champion this especially within their broader peer groups and networks.
- d. **Reach out to new actors:** Partnerships with new government donors with potential for significant contributions to CERF has been challenging including with Gulf partners. While initiating outreach in New York, it will be important to promote high level peer advocacy and leverage partnership networks to reach influential actors within these priority governments. This includes working with core CERF donors in their engagement with potential partners in the OECD/DAC fora as well as reaching out to regional bodies (ASEAN etc).
- e. **Mobilize Advisory Group members as advocates:** Support from the CERF Advisory Group is important to reinforce the SG’s call for a \$1 billion CERF target. CERF Advisory Group meeting in March 2016 is vital to lay the groundwork to promote the Advisory Group’s support to the SG’s recommendation in the lead up to the WHS. Looking ahead, the nomination of new members in 2016 and the leadership and advocacy role of key members are all critical to navigate a challenging landscape to profile a bigger CERF.

2. Building Block Two: Making the case for CERF

The challenging humanitarian context, with unprecedented high needs and complexity has set the rationale for an expanded CERF target. Building on CERF’s 10 year track record as the fast and flexible funding mechanism to meet urgent humanitarian needs, additional analysis and evidence is vital to support the call for a bigger CERF – especially in pitching the well-known advantages of CERF against a bigger canvas of humanitarian needs. This includes:

- a. **Articulate the concrete difference from a bigger CERF:** A clear narrative outlining the added benefits of a bigger CERF with evidence of potential gains is the foundation for the overall advocacy and engagement with key partners. This is covered in the paper on “Potential Advantages of a Larger CERF”.
- b. **Develop the investment case for an expanded CERF:** In addition, CERF needs to present a compelling investment case that convincingly demonstrates the returns on investment, especially in terms of results, of an expanded CERF. While further developing and refining CERF’s investment case leading up to the WHS the CERF secretariat will look at approaches and best practices from the global funds in development with similar targets (\$1 billion a year with multi-year frameworks). All core CERF contributors are also key donors to the global funds and are aware of the investment

cases and advocacy pitch. CERF should be on par with the kind of advocacy and pitch of these global financing mechanisms that have been successful in mobilising additional, significant and sustained level of political commitment and resources. This means adapting the specific operating model of CERF with the evidence and advocacy required to promote higher investments in CERF.

- c. **Strategic communications and marketing of CERF:** Telling the story of CERF – combining both evidence and human interest angles in a compelling and consistent way is important to boost the global visibility of CERF. A concerted campaign focused on particular groups of potential stakeholders could be necessary to mobilise the support to CERF covering both public communication and political advocacy. Promoting opportunities for overall donor visibility while also exploring ways to address interests around specific donor contributions is important.
- d. **Demonstrate CERF’s added value and results:** CERF needs to systematically demonstrate and communicate strong performance, results achieved and added value through quantitative and qualitative evidence. It is crucial that CERF consistently provides compelling evidence for key performance areas, especially its core strengths – speed, focus, results, transparency among others. Performance is captured in a range of tools and metrics - assessments, audits, reviews, evaluations – that are critical to capture the performance of CERF and other partners. It is crucial that CERF maintain high ratings across all key performance areas, especially its core strengths – speed, focus, results, transparency among others.

3. **Building Block Three: Diversified income portfolio**

The call for an increased CERF target comes as part of a call for increased funding for humanitarian response in general. While Member States are likely to be the core contributors to CERF, alternative funding sources are also vital to complement the income base. This is also reinforced by the funding model of the global funds. Complementary financing sources could include:

- a. **Innovative financing:** Demonstrating an ‘enterprising’ spirit and making head-way in tapping into new sources of financing which broadens the CERF income portfolio is important. It could also be a ‘pull’ factor to those donor governments and private sector partners who are interested to go beyond traditional grants. Efforts are underway to identify a few options on innovative financing for CERF. By its very nature and emphasis on ‘innovation’, innovative financing entails risks with implications for institutional risk appetite and risk management important to promote the breakthroughs required to successfully generate additional funding through these sources.
- b. **Islamic financing:** The WHS process in particular has driven significant momentum on Islamic financing for humanitarian needs. Shaping the overall focus and direction of potential funding, including for CERF is important in light of the significance of potential funding.
- c. **Other sources:** If CERF is to hit \$1billion, mobilising high net worth individuals, philanthropists and foundations in particular are other ways to augment the funding.

Immediate Next Steps:

Some of the actions outlined are underway. Following the discussion at the Advisory Group, CERF Secretariat will follow-up for more concrete guidance on the issues outlined. In particular:

1. Identify champions in the Advisory Group to promote advocacy on \$1 billion CERF.
 - o In consultation with members of the Advisory Group, identify opportunities for peer advocacy and collaboration between core and potential CERF donors– OECD/DAC fora; donor meetings.
2. Identify possible global advocates to help make the case for CERF.
3. Support on outreach for innovative financing linking public and private sector partners.