



Central Emergency Response Fund
High-level Pledging Event for 2025

A fund
for all,
by all



Photo: OCHA/Liz Loh Taylor

Concept Note

Last updated: 23 October 2024

The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a dependable and flexible funding mechanism to meet immediate and life-saving humanitarian needs globally. It is often the first funding source in new and escalating emergencies, and a strategic instrument for addressing critical funding gaps in underfunded humanitarian operations. Beyond saving lives, CERF fosters innovation and drives positive change, promoting more efficient, cost-effective, and dignified humanitarian assistance in a rapidly evolving context marked by increasing operational challenges and shrinking financial resources.

Strong, broad, and predictable donor support is vital for CERF to reach its annual funding target of US\$1 billion, as endorsed by the General Assembly in 2016, to enable the Fund to save the lives of millions of people that find themselves in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. In launching the 20th anniversary of CERF's establishment, the High-level Pledging Event for 2025 seeks to mobilize the financial resources necessary to ensure CERF's continued ability to meet acute humanitarian needs wherever and whenever they arise.

The High-level Pledging Event will therefore:

- **Showcase CERF's achievements and unique role in alleviating the suffering of those most in need through strategic and catalytic funding**, and its complementarity with other humanitarian mechanisms such as Country-based Pooled Funds, as well as with development and peacebuilding actors.
- **Emphasize CERF's pivotal role in alleviating the suffering of people affected by conflict** by enabling UN agencies and partners to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to the most vulnerable.
- **Highlight CERF's growing importance in acting in anticipation of, and response to, climate-related humanitarian crises**, which now account for an average of 30 percent of its annual funding - partially enabled by the CERF Climate Action Account that was launched at COP28 and since then has been instrumental in expanding CERF's overall climate action portfolio.
- **Provide an opportunity for Member States and partners to express global solidarity by announcing pledges for 2025 and additional funding for 2024**, ensuring that CERF remains equipped to fulfill its mission amidst an increasingly overstretched and underfunded humanitarian system.

Date and venue

Tuesday, 10 December 2024
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., New York (EST)

Format: In-person

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

Registration

Kindly complete one form per delegation. Delegations may register a maximum of three delegates to attend in-person.

To register, please go to:

[REGISTRATION FORM](#).

The [deadline to register and send the pledge form](#) is

Thursday, 5 December 2024
COB New York.

Contacts

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

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

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Agenda

- Opening segment: This will include opening remarks by UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres and remarks by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) Mr. Tom Fletcher.
- High-level panel: A distinguished panel will focus on CERF's role in meeting the urgent life-saving needs of people in crises.
- Statements and announcements: Member States and partners to announce support and pledges to CERF for 2025 and potential additional top-ups for 2024. Interventions should be limited to two minutes each.
- Closing segment: Closing remarks by Mr. Tom Fletcher, USG/ERC, OCHA.

Participants

All Member States, Observer Missions, UN agencies and partners are invited.

Event Details

The Event will take place in-person on **Tuesday, 10 December 2024, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (EST)** in ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters in **New York**.

Member States are invited to participate at the Principal level. The HLPE will be live-streamed on UN Web TV and is to be held in English, with interpretation services in the six official UN languages. Each delegation may register a maximum of three delegates to attend the event in-person.

Media and social media

A dedicated communications CERF@20 campaign is expected to run from December 2024, providing opportunities and assets for engagement, while multimedia content showcasing the impact of CERF allocations will be screened.

Highlights of CERF Achievements in 2024

Despite a challenging funding environment, CERF has remained at the forefront of global humanitarian responses in 2024, enabling life-saving assistance wherever and whenever needed the most. While projections for CERF's total income for 2024 show a modest improvement over 2023, **sustained efforts and more predictable support are essential to ensure that CERF can meet the growing intensity and frequency of crises confronting the humanitarian system today.**

Throughout the year, **new and escalating conflicts** in places such as the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Lebanon, and Sudan continued to drive displacement and deepen suffering. During the year CERF played a pivotal role in responding to these crises, offering a lifeline to millions of conflict-affected people.

For example, **CERF allocated over \$87 million in 2024 to assist 4.7 million people affected by the conflict in Sudan**, as well as people who fled to neighboring countries and the communities hosting them. CERF acted swiftly throughout the year to address the needs arising from the war, particularly as millions teetered on the brink of famine. The Fund allocated \$15 million in February, followed by \$26 million in April and another \$25 million in September, primarily focusing on preventing further deterioration in food security levels and widespread famine. **Complementing CERF's efforts, over \$120 million was disbursed from the Sudan and South Sudan Humanitarian Funds**, prioritizing support to local frontline responders and improving access to hard-to-reach areas. The timing of the allocations helped the humanitarian response adapt to the evolving crisis, despite fluctuating donor contributions.

CERF and the Country-Based Pooled Funds also played a critical role following the late September 2024 surge in hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. CERF and the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund were among the first funding sources for the newly launched [Flash Appeal](#) – swiftly mobilizing \$22 million. **Within hours of the conflict's escalation, CERF fast-tracked \$10 million to meet the urgent needs of displaced populations and those remaining in conflict zones in Lebanon.** While CERF funded priority sectors identified in the appeal, the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund directed \$12 million to national and international NGOs on the frontlines to deliver essential shelter, food assistance, and protection services. CERF's support extended beyond Lebanon, with an additional \$12 million allocated in October to assist Lebanese refugees who fled to Syria.

While conflict and displacement posed major humanitarian challenges in 2024, **the climate crisis further compounded the situation**, triggering floods, cyclones, droughts, and other types of shocks that disrupted

lives and livelihoods across multiple regions. In response, CERF allocated **nearly one-third of its 2024 funding to climate-related disasters**, continuing last year's trend.

CERF's ability to respond to climate-related disasters was supported by the **CERF Climate Action Account (CCAA)**, established at COP28, which provided additional funding to help CERF expand its climate action portfolio, while increasing visibility of the critical role humanitarian action plays in addressing the climate crisis. Without support from the CCAA, CERF would not have been able to **launch its first-ever \$10 million funding envelope for climate action** aimed at advancing climate-smart humanitarian action in protracted crises to strengthen communities' resilience to climate shocks through innovative projects, from climate-smart agroecological farming practices to climate-resilient sanitation services.

In line with its commitment to innovation and best-practice approaches, **CERF continued to promote anticipatory action this year**, enabling faster, more dignified, and cost-effective interventions ahead of predictable shocks, especially climate-related ones. In 2024, CERF allocated nearly **\$15 million through Anticipatory Action frameworks against floods in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Chad**. The activation of the Anticipatory Action framework in Nepal particularly exemplifies the timeliness of CERF as a funding mechanism, with \$3.4 million approved within six minutes of the framework's activation in September.

Even amid new and escalating crises and against a backdrop of tight funding, **CERF in 2024 also delivered on its mandate to support underfunded humanitarian operations**, releasing \$200 million to address critical funding gaps across 17 countries, including protracted humanitarian operations in the Sahel, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and Yemen. CERF's allocations to underfunded emergencies **continued to advance localization** by encouraging greater engagement of local and national organizations in the prioritization of CERF funds at country level, as well as sub-granting by UN country teams. As a result, a quarter of these funds were channeled towards national and local partners, in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.

Beyond saving lives, **CERF upheld its role as a global public good**, driving positive change across the humanitarian system by promoting quality programming that caters to the needs of the most vulnerable. For the second consecutive year, as part of CERF's underfunded emergencies allocations, **the Fund allocated a dedicated envelope of \$4 million to support system-wide initiatives on Accountability to Affected People**. In Niger, for instance, CERF's support helped expand UNHCR's call center for Accountability to Affected People and strengthen complaint management mechanisms, benefiting the entire humanitarian community in the country.

Background

Established in 2006, the CERF has allocated over \$9 billion to provide life-saving assistance for millions of people in over 100 countries and territories. Since CERF was established, global funding needs through humanitarian appeals have increased almost tenfold – from \$5.2 billion in 2006 to assist 32 million people to some \$49 billion in 2024 to assist 187.6 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 142 Member States, including 58 that have also benefited from CERF funding – a testament to the world's collective commitment to CERF as a “fund for all, by all.”

