

Independent Reviews of the Value Added of CERF in the Horn of Africa Drought Response 2011: Synthesis and Overview

Glyn Taylor and Barnaby Willitts-King
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Introduction and scope

1 This report synthesises the findings of four independent country reviews undertaken in 2012 as part of the CERF Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF). Separate reports on Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti were commissioned by the CERF Secretariat in 2012, since one-third of 2011 CERF disbursements were made to these countries as part of the response to the drought crisis in the Horn of Africa in 2011.

2 This report examines the following questions to draw out the key conclusions and salient broader lessons from the country reviews:

- a What were the key similarities and differences in the use of CERF in responding to the crisis in the four countries?
- b To what extent and in what ways were the crisis and the response regional?
- c What lessons can be drawn from the 2011 drought for future responses by CERF?

A. The role of CERF in review countries

3 This section looks at the three major dimensions of CERF's role in the Horn of Africa: core data on fund size and usage; timeliness; and the operational environment within which CERF functions.

Core data

4 A total of \$128m was disbursed by CERF to the Horn of Africa in 2011. CERF grants for the Horn of Africa drought in 2011 were made through the rapid response and underfunded windows for the review countries as follows:

Table 1: CERF grants to Horn of Africa 2011

2011 Rapid Response

Month	Emergency Description	Recipient Agencies	Amount
July	Djibouti Drought	UNICEF, FAO, UNHCR, WFP, WHO	\$3.1 mill
June	Ethiopia Drought	UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$14.6 mill
July	Ethiopia Refugees	UNHCR, WFP	\$10.0 mill
July	Kenya Drought	FAO, IOM, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$13.5 mill
July	Kenya Refugees	UNHCR, WFP	\$3.1 mill
July	Somalia Drought	FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$28.0 mill
July	Somalia Drought	UNICEF	\$10.0 mill

2011 Underfunded

Round	Description and CERF remarks	Recipient Agencies	Amount
1 st	Djibouti Drought	UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, WFP, WHO	\$3.0 mill
1 st	Ethiopia refugees, IDPs, food insecurity and drought	FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$11.0 mill
2 nd	Ethiopia Drought	FAO, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$11.0 mill
1 st	Kenya Refugees and Drought	FAO, IOM, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$6.0 mill
1 st	Somalia drought and long-term displaced	FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$15.0 mill

5 This was against the backdrop of significant humanitarian needs. The regional appeal document 'Humanitarian Requirements for the Horn of Africa Drought 2011' estimated total needs for the 4 countries at \$2,481m for the calendar year, broken down as follows:¹

Table 2: Breakdown of Regional Humanitarian Appeal

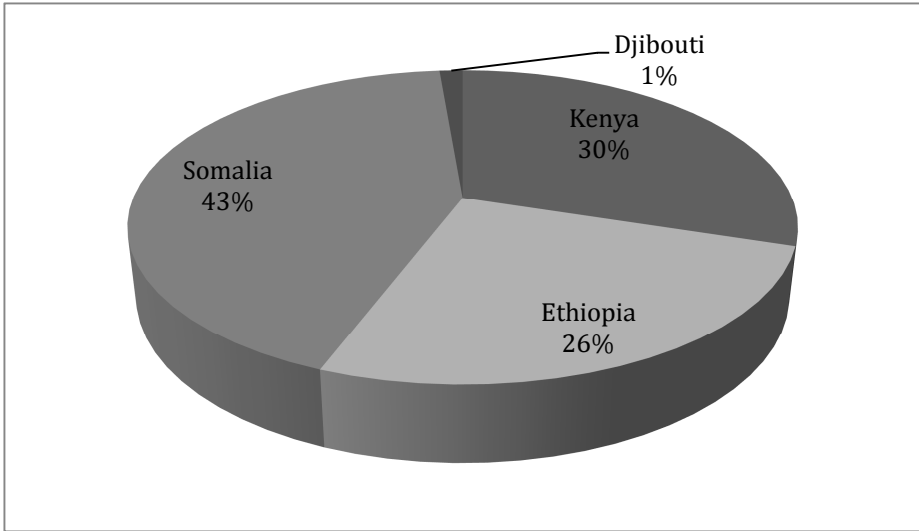
Country	Requirements in Regional Appeal	Contributions against Appeal	Total 2011 contributions	CERF contributions
Kenya	741	529	642	23
Ethiopia	644	n/a	823	46
Somalia	1063	866	1341	53
Djibouti	33	19	42	6
Total	2481			128

All figures US\$m

6 As illustrated in Figure 1, Somalia made up 43% of the humanitarian requirements, followed by Kenya and Ethiopia, with Djibouti making up 1% of the estimated requirements.

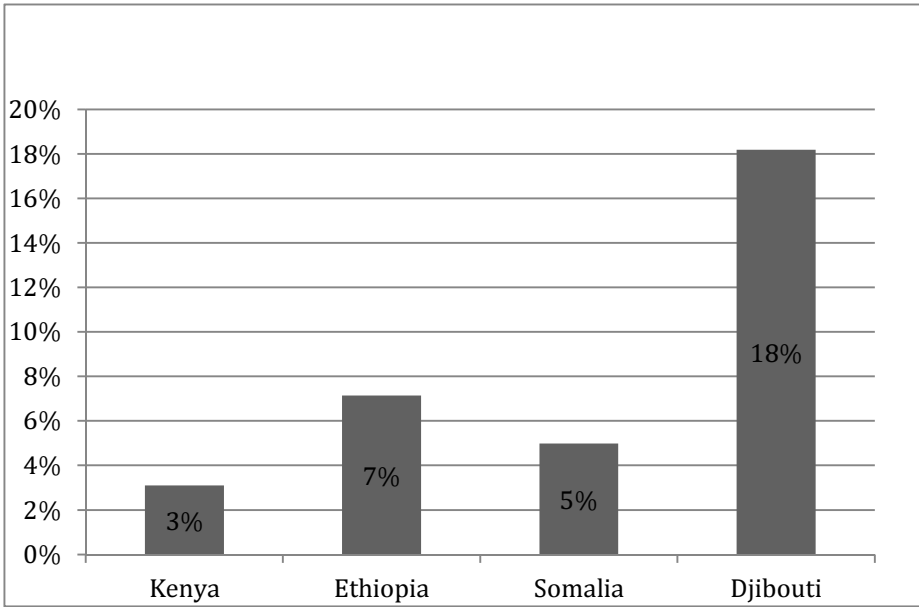
Figure 1: Breakdown by country of humanitarian requirements in Horn of Africa 2011

¹ 'Humanitarian Requirements for the Horn of Africa Drought', UN, July 2011



7 Overall, CERF contributed 5% of the humanitarian requirements set out in the 2011 regional humanitarian requirements document for the Horn of Africa. The percentage contributed by CERF ranges from 3% to 18% in the different countries as shown in Figure 2. This demonstrates the varying significance of CERF as a donor in the countries, ranging from Djibouti, where CERF was the largest humanitarian donor in 2011, to Kenya, where it was the eighth largest.

Figure 2: CERF contributions as % of response to Horn of Africa appeals 2011



8 Table 3 illustrates the differing impact of the drought by country in terms of the percentage of the population affected to the extent requiring humanitarian assistance – ranging from 6% in Ethiopia, the lowest percentage but the highest absolute numbers at 4.8m people, to almost half the population of Somalia.

Table 3: Affected and total populations

Country	Total population/m	Total affected	% affected
Kenya	41.1	3.7	9%
Ethiopia	82.8	4.8	6%
Somalia	7.5	3.7	49%
Djibouti	0.8	0.17	21%

Timeliness

9 There is a consistent picture across the four countries that CERF rapid response funds were timely in the sense of filling major funding shortfalls in the first half of 2011. However CERF funds arrived ‘only marginally, but critically ahead of the significant upswing in funding’ in July 2011.²

10 There was a general consensus that the CERF requests could and should have been made earlier, but this did not occur for the following reasons:

- a A perception that CERF would not respond favourably to an RR request so soon after the first underfunded allocation
- b Reluctance to move faster than government in Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia – where UN agencies were concerned about increasing needs, but governments had not declared famine or requested increased assistance
- c In Somalia, risk aversion of the humanitarian system despite warning signs, reinforced by apparent lack of donor support
- d RR submissions were packaged together for each country rather than being submitted individually by agencies when needs were identified. This may have held back the timeliness of some submissions by a small margin. This was due to a desire to remove the possibility of ‘competition’ between the responses at the level of the CERF secretariat

11 At the time of the field visit for the Kenya country study, OCHA was in the process of finalising a relatively small request to the Rapid Response Window for ‘early response’ in 2012. The request was seen in part as action responding to a lesson learned from the 2011 case, an opportunity to act early and lesson the severity of the impending disaster. The concept of ‘early response’ presents both opportunity and risk for the CERF. CERF has the opportunity to show confidence in the analysis and evidence that the UN led system can generate. However, the misuse of this opportunity, to appeal to CERF to generate funds for regular programming would quickly undermine confidence.

Operational environments

12 The operating environment in each country, and the relationship between countries, play a defining role in the use of CERF as an instrument in the region. This

² Somalia PAF country review report – but applicable to all countries

section focuses on two important elements of each country context that have a significant bearing on how CERF functions:³

- ☒ The relationship between the UN system with other significant actors: national and local authorities and donors
- ☒ The relationship between CERF and country level pooled funds

13 In Somalia, central government plays a limited role in humanitarian coordination. Access for operational actors has been a severe and ongoing challenge. In areas controlled by Al Shabab, there has been a history of tension with UN agencies and other humanitarian actors. Many, including WFP and UNICEF, have been intermittently banned from operating. In some cases (and specifically in the case of WFP), this has precluded not only a direct operational presence but subcontracting arrangements and the onwards supply of relief commodities. Given the challenges of access, donors have looked to a range of disbursement arrangements. These include extensive funding to the UN-led system for areas where they had sustained access, even intermittent, and the direct funding of independent actors, notably ICRC and MSF and other INGOs.

14 Donors have also made extensive use of the Somalia CHF to fund national NGOs with presence in areas challenging for international actors. The Somalia CHF is the largest in the region, disbursing almost \$85m in 2011. The CHF has been used extensively by donors to partially resolve the access problem i.e. to ensure that local actors with pre-negotiated access have a channel to funding for essential operations; and to isolate themselves from specific challenges (notably heavy administration and risk) of working with numerous local actors. In contrast, CERF was severely limited in its ability to pass through funding to local actors with no existing partnership ties to UN agencies.

15 Allocation for the CHF operates at two levels: a high level allocation, run by the HC and a small group, which decides on funding envelopes; and a fully inclusive but relatively heavy process through the clusters for project level allocation. The UFE window of CERF in 2011 was run in conjunction with the first CHF allocation, using the same high level allocation process. The use of clusters in the second stage of allocation, however, was not automatic and varied greatly by cluster. The allocation through the RR window did not mirror CHF process, and did not involve consultation with clusters.

16 In Ethiopia by contrast, access to beneficiaries is relatively easy and detailed surveys and assessments are carried out, together with government. The challenge here is the tight control exerted by the federal and regional governments over the activities of international organisations, of which there is considerable suspicion of their motives. The tendency is for official government estimates of affected populations to be lower than those made by humanitarian agencies, but the official

³ A full background section is set out in each of the country reports

figures must be adhered to. National capacity is stronger than other countries in the region but resource and staffing constraints still limit the effectiveness of government lead agencies.

17 In Ethiopia there is significant synergy between the HRF and CERF in terms of both of analysis and process. In Ethiopia there has also been a reluctance to integrate the processes of CERF and HRF fully to avoid upsetting the delicate balance of different actors. They also support slightly different niches: CERF is used for 'big-ticket' pipeline contributions while CHF and HRF are focused on NGOs, often in a complementary way.

18 Kenya's 'two disasters', drought and refugees (predominantly from Somalia) have largely separate coordination structures and have different sets of political implications. On drought related issues, there is a largely positive relationship with government who ostensibly lead on humanitarian coordination. In practice, however, repeated Kenya studies have reported that government participation in humanitarian funding is sporadic at the sectoral level. Refugee coordination is run by UNHCR, with Government and sits apart from 'reformed' coordination structures. Donors have a multitude of channels through which they pass funds to operations in Kenya. UN led mechanisms are key funding conduits for drought related responses (via inclusive sectoral groups of varying strength and varying government involvement) and for refugee response through UNHCR. Donors also have large bilateral programmes or platforms, especially the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALS).

19 Kenya has a relatively small emergency fund (\$3.5m in 2011) and is managed by one member of staff within OCHA. The ERF is noted as having a high level of deliberate consultation with government and a high level of transparency with donors at the country level, notably through the fund's advisory board. CERF and ERF allocation processes are managed by OCHA but there is no shared process between the CERF and the ERF. Notwithstanding the difference in scale of the funds, there is no explicit reason the same set of strategic priorities should not drive the two funds. In practice, especially for the RR window of CERF, timeliness of decision making is perceived to trump inclusiveness.

20 Djibouti's operational environment is characterised by a stance on international action similar to Ethiopia in terms of the government exercising control; and the government is motivated by a desire to project stability to the international partners on whom it depends; as a small country it struggles to attract attention from the international community beyond security interests. CERF plays a key role as a major donor to the small set of humanitarian actors.

21 To summarise, differences in context notwithstanding, a number of findings are common across the countries:

- ☒ For the most part, CERF allocations were perceived as appropriate and in line with CERF criteria.
- ☒ CERF was timely in filling funding gaps in the first half of 2011, but should have been used earlier.
- ☒ For the RR window, speed of process was prioritised over inclusivity of decision-making and transparency was consistently less than expected by CERF guidance. That the trade-off of speed over inclusivity works to the advantage of UN Agencies, through whom the bulk of funding flows and cements the sense of CERF as an internal UN funding channel.
- ☒ An aspect of this diminished inclusivity related to a limited role for Government in allocations, especially the RR window. In the three countries with established country level pooled funds, allocation processes, through repetition, had developed mechanisms to interface with local authorities, or in the case of Somalia to deal with the challenges of access for international agencies. The two larger funds showed elements of synergy with the CERF, more so for the UFE, but deliberate engagement with government in allocation processes was diminished
- ☒ Additionally, there was reasonable adherence to reporting requirements but limited added value of the HC's annual report, and no follow up of previous PAF reviews.
- ☒ CERF Secretariat was widely perceived as responsive and professional in overseeing and facilitating the process.

B. Regional dimensions of the crisis and response

22 At its most basic, the crisis could be described as 'regional' in the sense that multiple countries in the Horn of Africa were affected. Many of the underlying drivers of climate, poverty and conflict are similar across the region. Economies are formally and informally linked across the region. Many issues common to all countries in the region, such as displacement, are possibly better viewed as a complex set of cross-border issues between two (or sometimes three) countries, rather than a regional issue per se.

23 The reality of the response, however, was an explicitly inward focus in each country and a distinct centre of gravity related to the appeal process and standing coordination structures. Each response cycle is also distinctly linked to the prevailing politics in each country, although this includes relationships with neighbours. Each response competes as well as cooperates with the others. A regional appeal was launched but this was more a compilation of each country response rather than an attempt to build a strategy across the region.

24 The OCHA regional office in Nairobi has a challenging coordination function across a large and diverse region. The regional office plays a number of functions:

- ☐ 'Surge support' to countries where OCHA has limited presence. This included deployments to Djibouti to support the Resident Coordinator there, including the preparation of CERF requests.
- ☐ Disaster preparedness across the region, in countries with no permanent OCHA presence, through work with UN Country Teams and national disaster management authorities.
- ☐ Chairing the Regional Humanitarian Partnership Team (RHPT), a senior level forum styled on the IASC and run in conjunction with IGAD.
- ☐ Regional reporting and analysis, including cross border issues and multi-regional preparedness.

25 As such, a significant, hands-on role in operational coordination is beyond the current remit and capacity of the regional office. No Humanitarian Coordinator was appointed for the Region, and regional bodies, either the African Union or IGAD, were reported as playing no significant role in regional cooperation. OCHA staff in the regional office noted the need for greater engagement by partners in inter-agency analysis of cross-border migration issues.

26 The Regional appeal was of most benefit to Djibouti. The appeal drew attention to Djibouti in comparison to its larger neighbours. It also drew in certain levels of funds which were 'earmarked' to the whole regional response i.e. which could be used flexibly within the region. Agencies could direct these funds to Djibouti, on the basis that it was underfunded in relative terms. While CERF funding was allocated to Djibouti, however, this was not part of any regional approach by CERF, nor linked to the regional appeal.

27 CERF works as a tool of the UN-led humanitarian system and works optimally through 'reformed' humanitarian systems i.e. with dedicated Humanitarian Coordinators, strong inclusive appeals and inclusive clusters. In the absence of these characteristics at the regional level, the role which CERF could realistically play in keeping with its normal guidance was limited.

28 Information sharing did occur between countries to some extent. Most collaboration was understandably noted between Somalia and Kenya, given the length of the border, cross-border movement and the co-location of a number of key actors in Nairobi. Coordinated responses were noted in WASH and health. The health sector in Kenya reported synchronised vaccination campaigns and disease surveillance exercises, as well as a cross border response to cholera.

29 There is a perception in Ethiopia that the 'Nairobi nexus' of regional offices as well as Kenya and Somalia country offices makes regional coordination revolve around those two countries, while Ethiopia's specific characteristics make it hard to bring into regional approaches. Djibouti's small size limit the degree to which it is on the regional radar, as well as its capacity constraints in both expertise and staff numbers to engage regionally.

30 There are a number of limits and challenges to the 'regionalisation' of response. As noted above, each country is very different. Ethiopia has a strong, assertive government which keeps very close control of humanitarian activities and is extraordinarily sensitive about public information by UN agencies or INGOs on the humanitarian situation. In attempting to summarise the situation region wide, sensitivity about the situation in Ethiopia provides a limiting factor.

31 Institutionally, agencies and the system find it difficult to establish cross-border monitoring, information sharing and programming. Better early warning and pre-emption of cross-border flows would help with programming and camp planning.

32 One UN Agency described a battle with its own regional office in terms of the analysis of data. The regional office took a broad summary of projections for agriculture and rainfall. It was challenging to convince them of the necessity for emergency response on the basis of more nuanced data showing 'hot spots' in relatively small but critical areas in the country context.

33 Further use could be made of a regional Humanitarian Coordinator – as appointed to the Sahel crisis in 2012 – to provide opportunities to focus on practical regional steps. However in the Sahel the affected countries are more similar than those in the Horn of Africa and the value added of a regional HC is yet to be analysed.

C. Lessons learned and recommendations for regional and major crises

34 Specific findings and recommendations are found in the separate country reviews. This section highlights lessons and recommendations applicable across multiple countries or at regional level.

Lesson learned 1: In the absence of formal, inter-agency regional coordination structures, the nature of the humanitarian system places limitations on the use of the CERF at the regional level.

35 While conceptually attractive, there are significant limits as to how far a regional approach can be operationalised within the UN-led humanitarian system. The system remains structured around individual responses coordinated and managed at the country level. There are few incentives for inter-agency, cross-border collaboration and little leverage that can be applied to encourage them. The varying strength of the host governments in the region, including their desire to control humanitarian action, as well as the relationships between them, exacerbate the challenges of regional coherence.

36 CERF serves the UN-led humanitarian system. To a great extent, its guidance presumes the presence of the products of humanitarian reform - strong humanitarian coordinators and clusters (or at least collaborative and inclusive

decision making). The absence of a formal, regional, inter-agency coordination structure in the Horn of Africa, with a corresponding strategic regional framework, placed obvious limitations on the use of CERF at the regional level in this case.

Recommendation 1: CERF should, in 2013, as part of its ongoing requirement for PAF country reviews, look at the use of the CERF in the Sahel, where a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed for the crisis in in 2012, with attention to CERF's use at the regional level.

37 In the absence of formal, regional, inter agency co-ordination structures through which CERF could play a 'traditional' role, it is appropriate for CERF to consider how it may have contributed at the regional level. In doing so, it is important not to use the term 'regional' as a catch-all.

Lesson learned 2: Possible routes for the CERF to support intervention at the regional level

☐ By contributing to individual agency's regional appeals

38 Although there was no active, operational, inter-agency coordination at the regional level, some agencies launched individual regional appeals (e.g. UNICEF). Although CERF could conceivably support an individual regional appeal, it is not clear there is precedent for this, and the absence of an 'intermediary' in the form of a regional HC would make this challenging in terms of the current CERF guidance. In theory, however, if an agency were to make the case that a specific regional element of an appeal required attention and met the Life Saving Criteria, there is no reason that CERF would not consider it.

☐ Contribute to regional level analysis / policy work

39 CERF could conceivably fund regional analysis. A better understanding of the dynamic drivers of migration by Somalis fleeing conflict and drought, for example, might underpin a more strategic regional approach that could be supported by CERF funding. However, the absence of strong regional inter-agency coordination remains problematic. CERF cannot fund the OCHA regional office, but in the event that the Office was able to gather consensus around an important regional issue, this could conceivably be put to the CERF for support.

Lesson learned 3: CERF is increasingly perceived as a proprietary UN funding channel, with decreasing engagement by wider stakeholders

40 Rather than being as inclusive and transparent as suggested in CERF guidelines, the evidence is that there is less non-UN engagement in allocation processes, certainly compared to country level pooled funds. There is some alignment between the CERF and country level pooled funds for the UFE window. It

has to be acknowledged, however, that for both windows, cluster engagement in allocation is the exception rather than the rule.

Lesson learned 4: Early response offers an opportunity for CERF to support innovative programming

41 The concept of ‘early response’ offers an opportunity for CERF. It may, in part, provide an antidote to the reticence, or ‘self censorship’, noted in country responses, especially where other donors and governments appear unwilling to act. There is an inherent risk, however, in that agencies have to balance self and collective interests.

Recommendation 2: CERF should consider whether to fund early response, taking into consideration lessons to be learned from Kenya and the Horn of Africa in 2012. If findings were positive, then guidelines could be amended to be applicable to other slow onset, chronic crises.

Lesson learned 5: Surge capacity served a useful purpose

42 Across the region, CERF surge capacity was well received. Given the scale of such crises and the regional dimension, the CERF could consider greater use of surge capacity either from the region or headquarters for a short period to better work with OCHA regional offices and UN agencies. This role could help to identify critical areas for CERF support and also provide support to the OCHA regional office and country offices in preparing and consolidating CERF submissions. In the event that regional HC was deployed, this would remain a useful and complementary function.

Recommendation 3: CERF Secretariat should be prepared to field more short term deployments/surge capacity to support regions/countries.