



International Rescue Committee

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**Statement by Ms. Farida Bena,
Director of Policy & Advocacy and Head of the Geneva Office,
International Rescue Committee**

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the International Rescue Committee, I wish to thank you for allowing me to make this statement.

The extraordinary nature of the COVID humanitarian response last year showed the real potential of the Central Emergency Response Fund in addressing the multi-faceted crisis triggered by the pandemic. For the first time in CERF's history, non-governmental organisations were able to receive CERF funding through two 25-million-dollar block grants managed by IOM, and UN Women and UNFPA, respectively. As one of those NGOs receiving funding through this mechanism, we have three key recommendations to make:

The first one is that CERF funding be made available to NGOs on a regular basis.

NGOs are currently ineligible for direct CERF funding. However, our experience with the IOM block grant showed it is still possible to find compromise solutions in the short run by having a UN agency administer the funds. We ask OCHA to make this mechanism a standard feature of future CERF disbursements to improve on aid delivery.

Our second recommendation is that NGOs be consulted on how UN agencies administer CERF block grants to NGOs. Building on the positive experience with the OCHA-NGO dialogue platform on country-based pooled funds, we ask that all NGO recipients of these grants be regularly consulted, either with a parallel dialogue platform for CERF or through permanent NGO seats in the CERF advisory board.

And finally, our third recommendation is that future CERF disbursements reach NGOs faster. While our experience receiving CERF allocations through a block grant has been positive, it still took several weeks for the funding to reach the frontlines, thereby limiting the impact of our collective action. We ask that future CERF disbursements to NGOs be processed within 36 hours of funding allocations, ensuring flexibility and speed of CERF pass-through in line with Grand Bargain priorities.

Thank you.