



## Key Messages on the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

September 2024

The following are a menu of key messages on the added value of CERF with some targeted messages for the Asia Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean regions. They can be used selectively depending on the background of each interlocutor.

### **Overall points on the added value of CERF:**

- **CERF is fast and expands donor's global reach.** Allocating funding within hours, CERF enables partners to quickly scale up. Because of its unearmarked nature, resources from contributing member states enable response in emergencies around the world.
- **CERF is a cost-efficient global emergency relief mechanism.** Donors to CERF save on the management costs of their support. By pooling contributions, only one entity bears the cost of reviewing and selecting priority projects, identifying partners with comparative advantage, planning for best impact, oversight, and risk management.
- **CERF funds the most relevant and impactful projects.** Funding decisions are made on the front lines by aid partners under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator and directly support the most critical components of humanitarian responses based on humanitarian prioritised need.
- **CERF fosters partnership building.** While CERF directly funds UN agencies, CERF also supports localized humanitarian action, with funds implemented through national and local aid partners.
- **CERF is an easy one-stop shop to support humanitarian action.** Donors who fund CERF achieve bigger impact than bilateral funding by generating critical mass and leverage CERF's global reach.
- **CERF is a reliable and trusted tool, managed according to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and risk-management.** CERF is ranked the top 10th most transparent international aid entity among the 1,550 organizations publishing their data (ref; IATI). All information is available live on [OCHA - CERF DATA HUB](#).
- **CERF benefits from the expert advice of both affected and donor Member States.** The CERF Advisory Group is an independent body, comprised of diverse individuals drawn from donor and affected Member States nominated by the UN Secretary General.
- **CERF promotes innovative approaches for improved, accountable and dignified humanitarian action, notably via Early and Anticipatory Action.** The establishment of anticipatory action (AA) frameworks ensures the delivery of assistance ahead of predictable emergencies and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the response. CERF aims to allocate 10 per cent of its annual funding to support coordinated AA.
- **CERF is a leading global humanitarian funding tool to respond to natural disasters and climate-related humanitarian emergencies.** In recent years, the proportion of CERF funding for climate-related response has increased to close to a third of its annual allocations. The CERF Climate Action Account launched at the end of 2023 allows the fund to further scale-up climate-related humanitarian action.
- **CERF operates in complementarity with other sources of funding, including Country Based Pooled Funds,** as well as peace building and stabilization funding wherever they co-exist.

### **Specific to the Asia Pacific region**

- **CERF is a major humanitarian player in Asia Pacific.** In 2023, CERF allocated \$107 million to life-saving activities for 3.8 million people across Asia and the Pacific, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Vanuatu to address displacement, conflict, climate-related and natural disasters. Total funding to the Asia and Pacific region since CERF's inception in 2006 is almost \$1.4 billion.
- **CERF promotes innovative approaches for improved, accountable and dignified humanitarian action via Early and Anticipatory Action which, as a disaster-prone region, is especially relevant in Asia Pacific.** The establishment of anticipatory action (AA) frameworks ensures the delivery of assistance ahead of predictable emergencies and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the response. CERF aims to allocate 10 per cent of its annual funding to support coordinated AA. Currently, \$102.3 million is pre-arranged through AA frameworks, including \$24.3 million in Bangladesh, Nepal, Fiji and the Philippines for storms and floods. In July 2024, AA triggers for floods in Bangladesh were reached, prompting an immediate disbursement of \$6.2 million in pre-arranged CERF funds.
- **CERF was proactive to ensure early and effective responses to El Niño-driven events.** In its approach to the 2023-2024 El Niño, CERF allocated \$67.6 million in early action and rapid response funding across 11 countries. This included \$2.1 million for Timor-Leste in January 2024 to mitigate forecasted droughts and the anticipated worsening of food insecurity, water scarcity and malnutrition.
- **With the Asia Pacific being the region hardest hit by climate change and extreme weather events, the CERF Climate Action Account provides a channel to enable CERF** to continue providing rapid funding in response to the humanitarian impacts of climate related disasters.

### **Specific to the Latin America and Caribbean region**

- **CERF is an impactful humanitarian player in the Latin America and Caribbean region.** In 2023, CERF allocated \$58 million to over 1.7 million people in need of life-saving assistance across the region, including in Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, and Venezuela to address displacement, conflict, floods and economic disruption. Total funding to the Latin American and Caribbean region since CERF's inception in 2006 amounts to \$578 million.
- **CERF promotes innovative approaches for improved, accountable and dignified humanitarian action via Early and Anticipatory Action.** The establishment of anticipatory action (AA) frameworks ensures the delivery of assistance ahead of predictable emergencies and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the response. CERF aims to allocate 10 per cent of its annual funding to support coordinated AA. Currently, \$102.3 million is pre-arranged through AA frameworks, including \$16.5 million in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti for droughts and storms.
- **CERF funding enables comprehensive needs-based responses to humanitarian crises.** For example, following the sudden surge in violence in Haiti in February 2024, CERF swiftly allocated \$12 million to support immediate life-saving assistance across multiple sectors.
- **With the Latin America and Caribbean region being hard hit by climate change and extreme weather events, the CERF Climate Action Account provides a channel to enable CERF** to continue providing rapid funding in response to the humanitarian impacts of climate related disasters. In response to Hurricane Beryl, on 4 July 2024, CERF allocated \$4 million within a day to kickstart humanitarian operations in Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

## Specific to the Africa region

- **CERF is a major humanitarian player in Africa.** In 2023, CERF allocated \$382 million towards life-saving activities in the continent, addressing humanitarian needs stemming from conflict, disease outbreaks and climate shocks. This funding benefitted 19.8 million people across the continent, representing over half of the total people assisted with CERF funding during that year. Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia were among the five largest recipients of 2023 CERF allocations globally. Total funding to the Africa region since CERF's inception in 2006 is \$9.2 billion.
- **CERF promotes innovative approaches for improved, accountable and dignified humanitarian action via Early and Anticipatory Action.** The establishment of anticipatory action (AA) frameworks ensures the delivery of assistance ahead of predictable emergencies and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the response. CERF aims to allocate 10 per cent of its annual funding to support coordinated AA. Currently, \$98.2 million is pre-arranged through AA frameworks, including \$67 million in Burkina Faso, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Niger for drought, floods, storms/tropical cyclones, and cholera. In September 2024, \$5 million were disbursed to support 230,000 people in Chad, preparing for a <90% chance of riverine flooding during the month of October.
- **With Africa being hard hit by climate change and extreme weather events, the CERF Climate Action Account provides a channel to enable CERF to continue providing rapid funding in response to the humanitarian impacts of climate related disasters, including El Niño-driven events.** In its approach to the severe 2023-2024 El Niño episode, CERF allocated \$20.8 million in early action and rapid response funding to Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Somalia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- **CERF plays a critical role in tackling food insecurity in Africa.** In 2023, CERF allocated \$108 million for food assistance and agriculture projects in the continent. More recently, in 2024, CERF promptly disbursed \$25 million to Sudan to prevent the further spread of famine, particularly in North Darfur, where famine conditions have been observed.
- **CERF funding enables rapid, needs-based responses to humanitarian crises caused by conflict and displacement.** In response to the outbreak of conflict in Sudan in April 2023, CERF swiftly allocated \$18 million enabling UN agencies and partners to provide humanitarian assistance within days. Since the start of the conflict, the Pooled Funds have allocated some \$409 million to address critical humanitarian needs in Sudan and neighboring countries (Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, CAR and Libya) affected by the conflict and related displacement crisis, including \$203 million in 2024 alone.

## Additional Key Messages on CERF for the Private Sector:

- **CERF is the emergency Fund of the UN Secretary General.** It enables humanitarian responders to deliver life-saving assistance whenever and wherever crises strike.
- **CERF funds are distributed to United Nations agencies** like the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) that are active on the frontlines of a humanitarian emergency.
- **CERF funding allocations are decided by local experts** under the guidance of the UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinators, the senior-most UN officials in countries experiencing humanitarian emergencies.
- **Awards are based on the best local data and timely information.** Humanitarian partners jointly assess and prioritize the most urgent humanitarian needs under the leadership of the UN, fostering coordination as well as collaboration and collective ownership of the emergency response.

- **Companies and individual donors can trust that CERF funds are only spent on urgent lifesaving assistance, and only given to trusted, vetted UN agencies.** All funds are spent in accordance with the strictest standards to ensure aid is not diverted.
- **Global reach: CERF funds reached nearly 33 million people in 40 countries in 2023.** Some \$668 million – mostly from governments – was channeled to the best placed humanitarian organizations in the most acute emergencies in the world.
- **CERF funding is quick,** with initial awards made within days of a sudden emergency, enabling very rapid response in a crisis and serving as a catalytic tool that then allows partners to leverage additional funding from government and private sources.