

Key Messages

CERF Highlights in 2021

- **In 2021, CERF has continued to be instrumental in supporting global humanitarian efforts in a context of increasing needs.** As of early November, CERF has ensured the provision of lifesaving assistance for millions of people in 34 countries at a total value of \$500 million. It is expected that 2021 will see the second highest CERF allocation levels ever - only surpassed by the record-breaking 2020 when \$848 million was allocated.
- **CERF’s speed has been crucial for the humanitarian system’s ability to ensure timely responses in 2021, with the most urgent grants processed in less than two working days.** CERF’s speed was for example demonstrated in response to the devastating fire that tore through the world’s largest refugee camp in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh in March — where CERF immediately made \$14 million available to provide urgent shelter and other assistance to tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees.
- **CERF has showcased its instrumental role in enabling time-critical responses.** For example, when responding to the escalating conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) approved a CERF allocation of \$13 million for time-critical response following an escalation of the conflict. Another \$15 million was released from CERF in June 2021 to assist the most affected communities in the region following improved access for humanitarian operations.
- **CERF was instrumental in the humanitarian system’s response to rapidly deteriorating situations, including in Afghanistan.** During 2021, CERF allocated over \$90 million to humanitarian responses in the country, including \$20 million in August to enable the Afghanistan country team to “stay and deliver” and scale up the humanitarian response. In September, CERF released another \$45 million to prevent a collapse of the country’s health-care system and ensure continued provision of lifesaving health services. Another \$13 million was allocated in October to support the most underfunded operations in the country.
- **During the year, CERF responded to the impacts of extreme climate events and a rising number of natural disasters.** In some countries, this was further aggravated by unrest and conflict contributing to catastrophic levels of food insecurity. To help stave off potential famine in high-risk countries, in early 2021 CERF disbursed \$80 million to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, helping efforts to save the lives of millions of people and protect livelihoods.
- **CERF continued to be a lifeline for people caught in crises that do not attract sufficient donor attention but where needs remain critical.** Through its Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) window, in 2021, CERF has provided \$135 million to 12 underfunded and neglected crises, ensuring life-saving assistance to an estimated 9.7 million people. This included \$10 million to specifically meet the needs of people living with disabilities who are often disproportionately impacted by humanitarian crises.
- **While CERF again in 2021 has saved the lives of millions of people caught in crises, contributions to CERF for the year have so far failed to keep pace with the growing humanitarian needs and funding levels remain far from CERF’s annual funding target of \$1 billion.** By mid-November, \$547 million had been received – significantly below the end-year total in 2020 of \$624 million. End-year top-ups for 2021 and robust pledges for 2022 will enable CERF to provide timely responses to new crises and scale up funding to ongoing emergencies as needed.

CERF's Fifteen Year Anniversary

- Over the past 15 years, the CERF's flexibility, speed, and innovative nature have made the fund an essential component of the international humanitarian response system and a shared success, being one of the fastest ways to assist people affected by humanitarian crises.
- Since 2006, the fund has provided some US\$7.5 billion to support crisis-affected people in over 110 countries and territories, thanks to the generosity of 130 Member States and Observers, as well as non-governmental entities and private individuals.
- Since 2006, a total of 59 Member State recipients of CERF funding have also contributed to the fund—a testament to the fund's nature as a “fund for all, by all”.
- On average, CERF has annually helped feed some 10 million people, provide water and sanitation to some 8 million people, ensure health services to over 20 million people, and emergency shelter to over 1 million people. In addition to that, CERF has provided emergency agricultural support, nutrition, and many other lifesaving services to millions more.
- CERF has over the years also helped to improve the international humanitarian system by promoting new and innovative approaches to push positive and transformative change.
- CERF's efforts to promote change includes encouraging a humanitarian system that is more anticipatory and less reactive. Since 2018, CERF has supported Anticipatory Action pilots in eleven countries to ensure a more timely and predictable response. In 2021, for example, CERF allocated \$20 million to Somalia to mitigate and prevent the humanitarian impacts of a forecasted severe drought, thereby ensuring a faster, cheaper, and more dignified response.
- CERF also demonstrated its agility and ability to promote positive change in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the unique humanitarian challenges posed by the pandemic, CERF responded using new allocation modalities that enabled efficient responses to this unprecedented crisis.
- CERF's COVID-19 response included the fund's first multi-country block grants to jump-start UN agencies' emergency responses in contexts with the greatest needs. CERF also introduced its first “NGO allocation” through IOM to support NGOs when funding for front-line responders was critically low. Finally, CERF undertook two innovative allocations in response to increases in gender-based violence. CERF earmarked a portion of its \$100 million UFE allocation in 2020 for GBV and provided a block grant to UNFPA and UN Women with 30 per cent of the resources channeled to support women-led organizations in eleven countries.

Global Needs and the \$1 Billion CERF

- Since CERF's establishment, global humanitarian requirements coordinated by the UN have drastically increased from \$5.2 billion to assist 32 million people in 2006 to some \$36 billion to support over 161 million people in 2021. Recognizing the increased needs and CERF's position as one of the most effective financing tools to provide time-critical, life-saving humanitarian assistance, the General Assembly in 2016 endorsed the Secretary-General's call to more than double CERF's annual funding target to \$1 billion.
- In 2020, Member States generously contributed \$624 million to CERF, though leaving a significant gap from meeting the \$1 billion target.
- In the face of ever-growing humanitarian needs, reaching the target of a \$1 billion CERF in 2021 will be more crucial than ever to provide urgent life-saving assistance to people affected by humanitarian emergencies and to ensure that no one is left behind.

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- If all Member States were to allocate a small percentage of their humanitarian funding through the CERF, the fund would quickly reach \$1 billion.

Background and Key Data

CERF Annual High-level Pledging Event (8 December 2021)

- The event is an opportunity to mark CERF's fifteen-year anniversary, and for partners to express their support to the fund through financial pledges, and by promoting CERF's role as a vehicle for shared humanity.
- The event will showcase CERF's results and unique added value in delivering lifesaving assistance and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, including CERF's role in promoting fast, coordinated, and effective humanitarian responses wherever and whenever crises hit.
- The event will highlight CERF's global reach and comparative advantages for providing fast, agile, and strategic allocations in complementarity with other funding. This will include the fund's critical responses to climate-related emergencies, as well as CERF's important role as a driver of positive change throughout the humanitarian system.
- The opening segment will include keynote remarks by the United Nations Secretary-General. A high-level panel will follow that will discuss the success of CERF in meeting lifesaving needs of people in crises. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator will also deliver a statement and is to preside the second segment where Member States and partners will announce pledges and support for CERF in 2022 and beyond.

Global Results: People Supported by CERF (2020)

- In 2020 (the latest full year with consolidated data on number of targeted beneficiaries), CERF grants totalling \$848 million helped humanitarian partners deliver lifesaving assistance to a record-breaking 69.3 million people – more than twice as many as in 2019.
- Almost half of the people receiving lifesaving assistance from CERF (32.5 million people) were affected by disease outbreaks reflecting CERF's unparalleled response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CERF also supported 16.7 million people affected by conflicts and 12.2 million by natural disasters. CERF funding also allowed UN agencies and partners to assist an additional 7.8 million people affected by severe economic disruption and other compounding factors.
- Overall, 54 per cent of people targeted with 2020 CERF funding were women and girls, and close to 45 per cent were children under age 18 (full Annual Results Report available here: https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/CERF%20Annual%20Results%20Report%202020_0.pdf).

CERF's Core Features

- As an essential enabler of global humanitarian action, CERF's Rapid Response (RR) window allows humanitarian partners to kick-start relief efforts in a coordinated and prioritized manner when a new crisis emerges, or an ongoing emergency deteriorates.
- For protracted crises not attracting sufficient attention, CERF's Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) window helps scale-up and sustain relief operations to avoid critical gaps when no other funding is available, and it serves as a signal to donors that additional resources are required.
- CERF embodies the spirit of global solidarity and is neutral, impartial, and independent. CERF is fully unearmarked to ensure funding meets the most urgent, lifesaving needs whenever, wherever crises hit, with agility, innovation, focus and scale.