

# CERF HIGH-LEVEL PLEDGING EVENT – A FUND FOR ALL BY ALL – 8 DECEMBER 2020



## Key Messages

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### *Global Needs and the \$1 Billion CERF*

- Since CERF's establishment in 2006, global humanitarian requirements coordinated by the UN have drastically increased; from \$5.2 billion to assist 32 million people in 2006 to \$39.9 billion to support 260 million people in 2020. Recognizing the increased needs and CERF's earned 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 2019, Member States and partners responded generously, contributing an all-time high of \$835 million, which enabled the fund to support a forward leaning and high impact response to COVID-19, rapidly scale up response in existing humanitarian needs and allow for game-changing innovations.
- In the face of ever worsening humanitarian needs, a \$1 billion CERF is a bare minimum to effectively provide the urgent 'first aid' that people trapped in humanitarian emergencies today require to survive.
- If all Member States and partners were to allocate a small percentage of their humanitarian funding through the CERF, the fund would quickly reach \$1 billion.

### *CERF Annual High-Level Pledging Event on 8 December 2020*

- The event on 8 December is a platform for partners to express their support and global solidarity, including through financial pledges, but also by advocating for CERF's role as a vehicle for shared humanity. The event will offer Member States and partners an opportunity to demonstrate the global solidarity that the current humanitarian situation calls for, and collectively ensure that CERF is able to effectively respond to the growing humanitarian needs, now also compounded by COVID-19.
- The event will showcase CERF's results and unique added-value in 2020, including CERF's critical COVID-19 response and its comparative advantages for providing fast, agile and strategic allocations, as well as its complementarity with other funding.
- The Secretary-General will open the event followed by a high-level panel that will discuss the success of CERF in meeting the urgent life-saving needs of people in crises. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) will chair this session. This will be followed by a pledging segment where Member States and partners will be able to announce pledges for CERF in 2021 and beyond.
- We encourage all Member States and partners to support the fund; any contribution will make a difference in people's lives. In particular, multi-year support will enable more predictable and strategic financial planning in support of CERF's urgent life-saving assistance.

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## Core Features

- Over the past 15 years, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has been a shared success of the international community as one of the fastest ways to assist people trapped in humanitarian crises – in sudden onset and deteriorating emergencies, as well as underfunded situations.
- CERF is truly global and a ‘fund for all, by all’. Since 2006, the fund has provided more than US\$6.7 billion to support crisis-affected people in over 105 countries and territories, thanks to the generosity of 129 Member States and Observers, as well as non-governmental entities and private individuals. A total of 54 *recipient* Member States of CERF funding have also contributed to the fund - a sign of CERF’s global support and a testament to the solidarity that is one of CERF’s key strengths.
- CERF is neutral, impartial and independent. CERF is fully unearmarked to ensure funding goes to meet the most urgent, life-saving needs whenever, wherever crises hit, with agility, focus and scale. It enhances leadership and coordination, and it is cost-effective.
- In 2020, CERF has been instrumental in responding to humanitarian crises around the globe at a record level. The size of the fund in 2020 has allowed investments in innovations with unprecedented results, including a forward-leaning and high-impact response to the humanitarian consequences of COVID-19.

## CERF’s COVID-19 Response

- CERF’s COVID-19 response has been timely, flexible, record-setting and innovative. Three CERF allocations totalling more than \$125 million have been made to address the primary and secondary impacts of the pandemic in 46 countries. In addition, CERF has extended maximum flexibility to organizations in allowing them to adjust ongoing CERF projects to changing needs and operational constraints.
- On 25 March, the day the Global Humanitarian Response Plan was launched, CERF allocated \$60 million in response to the pandemic followed shortly by an additional allocation of \$20 million in support of logistics and supply lines. Even before this, CERF supported the humanitarian response to the pandemic with \$15 million to WHO and UNICEF, funding WHO response activities that started as early as 3 February. These allocations were made using an innovative approach to privilege speed and flexibility, disbursing funds directly to eight UN agencies at the global level and offering them flexibility to prioritize resource distribution to where they saw the greatest needs.
- On 23 June, CERF released another \$25 million through IOM to support front-line NGOs in delivering lifesaving health, water and sanitation assistance in six countries – the first such allocation in CERF’s history.
- CERF has also helped address the secondary impact of COVID-19 on the risk of gender-based violence (GBV). A \$5.5 million portion of the second underfunded emergencies allocation of the year was specifically dedicated for GBV activities. This earmarking had a catalytic impact and some countries increased the proportion of funds dedicated to GBV, nearly doubling the total amount for GBV to some \$10 million with an additional \$12 million allocated for health projects with GBV outcomes. Informed by the success of this GBV funding envelope, additional GBV-focussed allocations may be considered.

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### *Other Highlights of CERF Allocations in 2020*

- In 2020, CERF has been central to the humanitarian community's ability to respond to the growing humanitarian needs. The fund has so far provided some \$620 million (as of end-October) to support time-critical life-saving assistance to millions of people in 36 countries and territories. This is the highest amount ever allocated from CERF in a single year.
- Beyond allocations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CERF has targeted people affected by conflict and internal strife, natural disasters such as drought, locust outbreaks, floods and cyclones, and disease outbreaks such as Ebola and cholera:
  - In February, CERF quickly released \$30 million to immediately scale-up shelter and other critical assistance to thousands of civilians in northwest Syria after air strikes and shelling forced an estimated 586,000 people to escape their homes.
  - CERF also allocated \$10 million for early response to the devastating desert locust outbreak in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. The timely allocation ensured an immediate scale-up of efforts to control the infestation and mitigate its impact.
  - In 2020 CERF continued to explore ways to be even more timely and save more lives by supporting anticipatory life-saving humanitarian action in situations where imminent high-impact shocks can be predicted before they hit. In June, an anticipatory action framework in Somalia was activated when the agreed-on threshold for projected food-insecurity was reached and \$15 million was allocated from CERF. In July, CERF released another \$5.2 million in Bangladesh for anticipatory action in advance of severe flooding that had been forecasted with 10 days' notice.
  - During the year, CERF also continued to be a lifeline for people caught in crises that don't attract sufficient funding but where needs are urgent. CERF provided a record high \$225 million to 20 underfunded and neglected crises.

### *Results in Terms of People Supported*

- In 2019 (the latest full year with consolidated data on number of targeted beneficiaries), CERF grants totalling \$539 million helped humanitarian partners deliver life-saving assistance to an estimated 29.4 million people in 49 countries.
- Overall, 53 per cent of people targeted with 2019 CERF funding were women and girls, and close to 55 per cent were children under age 18.
- CERF funding in 2019 enabled life-saving assistance to 13.7 million people affected by conflict-related crises, 12.7 million people impacted by natural disasters and 3 million people in response to disease outbreaks (full Annual Results Report available here: [https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/CERF\\_ARR2019\\_FINAL\\_pages\\_20200903.pdf](https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/CERF_ARR2019_FINAL_pages_20200903.pdf))
- While complete 2020 data is not yet available, a record number of vulnerable people caught in humanitarian crises around the world will receive life-saving assistance in 2020 thanks to CERF.

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### *Four Underfunded Priority Areas*

- In 2019, Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Mark Lowcock requested that Humanitarian Coordinators/Resident Coordinators give special consideration to four generally underfunded priority areas when developing CERF applications. The four areas are: (a) support for women and girls, including tackling gender-based violence, reproductive health and empowerment; (b) programmes targeting disabled people; (c) education in protracted crises; and (d) other aspects of protection. Throughout 2019 and 2020, the CERF secretariat has through all of its allocations encouraged specific attention to these priority areas and thereby supported enhanced efforts to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are at the core of humanitarian response.
- During 2019, CERF increased its funding for the education and protection priority areas. For instance, funding for standalone protection programmes increased significantly, from \$30m in 2018 to \$53m in 2019. The year also saw the highest CERF funding level to the education sector since the Fund was established in 2006, with more than \$19 million allocated to emergency education projects, up from \$15 million in 2018 and more than double the amount allocated in 2017. In 2020, these trends have continued, and the year will conclude with further increases in these areas thanks to the dedicated focus.
- To further accelerate results and change within the priority underfunded areas CERF has also piloted targeted allocations, with dedicated allocations for GBV undertaken in second half of 2020. As a result, so far in 2020, CERF has allocated a record level \$40.6 million to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) programming, an amount that is expected to further increase by end of the year.