



Key Messages on OCHA, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) May 2024

The following are a menu of key messages on the added value of OCHA, CERF and CBPFs to help make the case for financial support. They can be used selectively depending on the background of each interlocutor.

1. Overall points on the added value of OCHA

- **Coordination creates a more impactful and cost-efficient humanitarian system.** OCHA-coordinated Humanitarian Response Plans, or equivalent, ensure that there is no duplication or gaps in humanitarian programming. In 2023, for example, OCHA coordinated the humanitarian programmes of hundreds of NGO and UN partners from across the world for a combined value of more than \$24 billion in tracked funding via OCHA's Financial Tracking Service.
- **Coordination ensures people most in need receive aid and protection first.** OCHA leads a prioritisation process at global level to ensure needs-based analysis identifies the most vulnerable. OCHA ensures aid programmes include a gender, age, and disability sensitive planning; thereby prioritizing aid to the most vulnerable populations first and saving more lives.
- **OCHA is the engine of system-wide innovation and transformation.** OCHA is focused on making the humanitarian system, less process driven, more efficient, and more accountable. OCHA ensures strong needs assessments, bringing affected people to the centre of decision-making, promotes the use of local partners, cash assistance and anticipatory action as mechanisms for more sustainable and efficient aid.
- **OCHA makes it easier for all partners to operate.** OCHA negotiates access with all parties to conflict. OCHA also advocates for the respect for international humanitarian law.
- **Coordination makes aid more transparent and accountable.** By aggregating and publishing needs, response planning, and response information and data, OCHA makes information available to every citizen, government, and aid group.
- **OCHA ensures there is proper leadership in the humanitarian system.** OCHA supports the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) who is the most senior UN official dedicated to humanitarian affairs, serving as the chief of the global humanitarian community (IASC). At the country-level, OCHA supports Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators in leading the Humanitarian Country Team, enabling strategic direction for the collective humanitarian action to meet multifaceted needs of the affected populations.
- **Coordination makes Member States' bilateral aid more effective.** OCHA sets norms and standards for response (e.g., UNDAC, INSARAG), making the work of various responders inter-operable and thus effective.
- **OCHA's coordination services benefit all Member States.** All Member States benefit from coordination services, irrespective of whether they finance OCHA. Nevertheless, having more donors contribute a fair share to coordination services can help reduce the collective burden of paying for such less visible yet essential services.

2. Overall points on the added value of CERF:

- **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 is fast and catalytic.** Allocating funding within hours, CERF enables partners to quickly scale up and ensures the most strategic, effective and efficient use of limited resources.
- **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 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 anticipatory action.
- **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.

Additional Key Messages on CERF for the Private Sector:

- **The Central Emergency Response Fund is the emergency Fund of the United Nations 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.

3. Overall points on the added value of Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs):

- **CBPFs are multi-donor humanitarian funds at the country level and are the easiest way for any donor to support humanitarian action in a particular crisis.** CBPFs provide funding based on humanitarian needs and priorities identified at the country level to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity.
- **CBPF respond to needs in a cost-efficient manner.** Donors save on the management costs of their contributions, by pooling contributions only one entity bears the cost of reviewing and selecting the best projects, identifying partners with comparative advantage, planning for best impact, oversight, etc. which is cheaper than if each donor had to bear the same costs individually. As a result, more funding is available for people in need. Even smaller contribution can make a significant impact.
- **CBPFs trigger system-change by empowering local responders.** CBPFs' country presence and broad partnership networks puts them in an excellent position to strengthen local and national actors' engagement in humanitarian responses. In 2023, over 40 per cent of CBPF resources went to local actors.
- **CBPFs empower affected people, through cash assistance.** Affected people can thus make their own choices about the assistance they need the most, the Funds continued to prioritize the use of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) and multi-purpose cash (MPC) assistance whenever feasible.
- **CBPF help achieve greater impact than bilateral funding.** As resources are pooled, combined contributions create critical volumes that can achieve greater impact, in a more strategic way than if individual contributions were made to specific projects.
- **CBPFs offer value for money.** At a 3 per cent programme support cost, CBPFs ensure the most strategic, effective and efficient use of limited resources in difficult and often dangerous circumstances, making taxpayer's money go further and cutting on multiple overheads.
- **CBPFs promote innovative approaches for improved and more accountable and dignified humanitarian action, notably via Early and Anticipatory Action.** OCHA and its pooled funds are uniquely positioned to lead collective anticipatory action and provide multisectoral pre-arranged financing.
- **CBPFs operate in complementarity with other funding mechanisms.** Through strategic and prioritized deployment of funding, CBPFs support the delivery of agile and coordinated needs-based responses, strengthen focus on the most vulnerable and ensure the best use of available resources. The Funds operate in complementarity with other sources of funding, including the Central Emergency Response Fund as well as peace building and stabilization funding wherever they co-exist.
- **CBPFs reinforce humanitarian coordination and leadership and ensure a needs-based response.** Humanitarian partners, including donors, jointly assess and prioritize the most urgent humanitarian needs through an inclusive and transparent process in support of crisis-specific Humanitarian Response Plans (or equivalent), fostering collaboration and collective ownership of the emergency response.
- **CBPFs are managed by OCHA according to the highest standards of management and transparency.** CBPF provide transparency, accountability and comprehensive risk-

management processes, whereby recipient organizations are thoroughly assessed, and relief projects are monitored with regular reporting on achievement.