

Country	Kyrgyzstan
Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator	
Reporting Period	1 January – 31 December 2008

The following is a narrative report on the use of CERF funds by the UN Country Team in Kyrgyzstan. Because the projects started in January and are still ongoing, this is a preliminary account of the outcome and/or results. As per the CERF guidelines, a full report of the projects will appear in March 2010¹.

The harsh winter of 2007-2008, followed by low precipitation during the spring and summer of 2008, led to depletion of Kyrgyzstan's hydroelectric resources and compromised its energy resilience. Soaring food and fuel prices, adverse weather conditions and declining remittances have further limited the purchasing power of the most vulnerable and contributed to a precarious food security situation for some.

In this context, a Contingency Plan was created by the UN Country Team in October 2008 on the basis of needs assessments carried out by United Nations organisations and partners to protect the most vulnerable individuals and critical institutions in the country. At the end of November 2008, the document was transformed into Kyrgyzstan's Flash Appeal, on the back of alarming figures for hydroelectric water reserves (that provide 90% of the country's electricity), and results of the Emergency Food Security Assessment carried out by the World Food Programme indicating high rates of severe food insecurity.

UNCT approved requests for CERF funding for the following projects:

- Start-up support for food assistance operations (WFP) US\$1,350,405
- Start-up support for agricultural support operations (FAO) US\$400,000
- Support for shelters for street children, including the establishment of a new shelter for street children in the city of Osh (UNICEF) US\$109,956
- Provision of winter assistance to asylum seekers and refugees (UNHCR) US\$110,197

In February 2009, the Flash Appeal was revised, to remove unfunded projects that were no longer considered timely. The revised Appeal, for just under \$15 million, is currently 58% funded (\$8,590,854). Of this, 23% is the initial CERF funding.

Thanks to a milder winter than expected and strict regional electricity usage quotas imposed by the government, the possibility of reaching dead level has been averted. Nevertheless, the quotas saw many vulnerable households and institutions around the country suffering daily sanctioned power cuts of between 4 and 14 hours. Further unplanned power cuts have also been suffered around the country as a result of electricity deficit among Kyrgyzstan's neighbours, power surges and heavy snowfall. Meanwhile, the country has experienced an economic downturn – industrial production in January and February is 76% of that for the equivalent period last year.

CERF funding has been used by WFP to purchase wheat flour and vegetable oil regionally and internationally, and to deliver it for local partners to distribute. FAO have used CERF funding to procure fodder seeds, animal feed and veterinary supplies for the most vulnerable families around the country. UNHCR have delivered emergency food supplies to 852 refugees and asylum seekers in the cities of Bishkek, Tokmok and Osh. With CERF Funding, UNICEF has provided support for 410 children without permanent residence, in shelters in Bishkek, Karakol and Osh (the Osh Emergency Shelter for Street Children was opened thanks to CERF Funding).

¹ The report has not been reviewed awaiting final report.

Despite growing food insecurity, an increase in livestock diseases and death, severe hardship for street and institutionalised children and a deterioration in hospital services and water access due to lack of electricity, donor funding for the Kyrgyz flash appeal took a long time to materialise regardless of earlier promises for funding in response to the needs identified in the contingency plan. CERF funding was instrumental to kick-start vital life-saving operations, which are now continuing on donor contributions.

Annex 1: Excerpts from UNICEF press stories:

"Thanks to generators, gas stoves, water heaters and other basic equipments supplied by UNICEF, the Child Protection Centre in Bishkek, capital city of Kyrgyzstan, has been able to cope with the recent winter energy crisis and continue to provide warm shelter and food to many homeless and vulnerable children."

"We provide a hot meal to 180 children now. It was 170 last week," says Mira Itikeeva, director of the Child Protection Centre."

"The beacons of hope have been recently lit for eight-year-old Nurlan Junushaliev. A few months ago, when he arrived at the UNICEF supported Rehabilitation Centre for Homeless and Disadvantaged Children, in Bishkek, capital city of Kyrgyzstan, he looked scared and gloomy. Due to malnutrition, his facial muscles were too weak to support his jaw and consequently his mouth was constantly open. After receiving vitamins at the rehabilitation centre, Nurlan regained strength and has already grown four centimeters. His face has changed and his future is revealing to be quite promising. Apart from tackling his poor nutritional status, the centre also helped him to attend school, something supposedly unreachable to him not that while ago."

Annex 2: Excerpts from testimonies to UNCHR from recipients:

Refugee from Uzbekistan:² *"Thank you very much for this timely help. Only the day before yesterday, my wife and I were thinking about oil and flour. We had only half a litre at home and we don't have money to buy more. My wife and I have been fasting for two months, eating once a day to save food for our children. Now we can eat normally three times a day as we have enough".*

Refugee from Afghanistan: *"My husband's salary was barely enough to pay the rent and we always felt short of food. My mother in law is hopelessly ill and healthcare is very expensive. In winter time when we didn't have electricity at home, my kids were forced to eat cold food. Sometimes they had nothing to eat. The food support provided by UNHCR will help us a lot. Now we have some money to treat my mother in law."*

² Names of refugees have been removed to preserve their confidentiality