

**Independent Review of the value added of the
Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
In Mauritania**

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Executive Summary

At the request of the CERF Advisory Group (AG), the CERF Secretariat developed a draft Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) in 2009 through close consultation with UN agencies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other stakeholders. In July 2010, the CERF AG endorsed the draft PAF that includes, amongst other things, a mechanism for the independent review of the value added by the CERF to the humanitarian response in a country. Reviews are to be conducted annually in a sample of three to five countries. Following a pilot review of the added value of CERF to humanitarian actions in Kenya using the PAF, three further countries were selected to give further feedback on the systems and procedures used to access the CERF. This report using the PAF covers interviews and document reviews in Mauritania specifically for the period of 2009. Any additional points on the 2010 CERF applications have also been taken into account. It is worth noting that since its establishment in March 2006, the CERF has funded 23 projects in Mauritania totalling \$8,836,038. Of these, 15 projects have been funded from the rapid response (RR) window and eight from the underfunded emergencies (UFE) window. During this time the loan facility has not been used.

The input from the UN country team during the period 2008/09/10 conformed to the CERF life-saving criteria and their proposals presented solid grounds for the CERF to give support to the emerging crisis. The submission focussed on the need for support for emergency food and nutrition due to the effects of flood damage in some areas and insufficient rain in others.

There are no clusters in Mauritania and the CERF applications were made on the basis of the ad hoc interagency assessment of need conducted by the UN agencies and their partners. The applications also fit well with the country five-year plan agreed with the Government for food and nutritional support. During 2009, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) wanted to include a proposal for \$6 million, but this was rejected by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) as it didn't comply with the country strategy. The issue was that it was basically a call for funds that had not come in and more importantly did not fit with the coherence of the food and nutrition focused CERF application made by the other four or five agencies. So, had UNHCR submitted it would have "ruptured" the logic.

The goal of CERF funding enabling a rapid humanitarian response was not achieved due to the 42-day period involved in completing the application¹. The majority of this time was taken up by negotiations between the RC/HC's office in Mauritania and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) regional office. At the time, the RC/HC's office was not aware that they could apply directly to the CERF Secretariat without an agreement with the OCHA regional office and that notification that the application was being made would be sufficient. It is not known how or why this situation arose but seems to be the process which was passed from CERF focal point to CERF focal point over the years where a number of people have covered this position. The CERF Secretariat did recommend the application to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) for approval and the disbursement of funds was carried out quickly enough for the funds to arrive in the agencies accounts within six days of the signatures of the letters of understanding (LoUs).

The slow application process did not result in significant operational impediments for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or the World Food Programme (WFP) who had

¹ See the FAO table on page 5 for details

their own funding and from other donors and were able to respond to the needs. However, the timing of the arrival of funds was critical for the programmes of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in particular due to the constraints the latter faces as a result of the planting season.

The CERF clearly promotes the position of the RC/HC within the UN system with the decision-making role in coordination of the UN country team (UNCT).

There are no separate systems for monitoring and reporting on CERF funding among any of the UN agencies. Their normal monitoring and reporting mechanisms were sufficient for the need for quality assurance and the UN agencies are aware of the reporting criteria. Quality assurance is maintained by all of the organisations involved in the delivery of life-saving support, many are signatories to Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and to Sphere but even those who are not have their own principles which demand the same levels in quality.

CERF funding is clearly predictable as three of the UN Agencies base their emergency response programme on its availability. It could be concluded that the predictability of the funding is too assured, as there is little to no attempt to access other donors prior to the crisis situation occurring. WHO indicated in an interview with the Country Representative that this way of working is going to change in 2011 and an attempt to acquire a broader funding base would be made. CERF funding does not appear to be used to leverage funding from other donors at this time.

There have not been any “no cost extensions” despite the suggestions that the three-month period for using the rapid response funds was too short. The CERF funds helped to fill the funding gaps for UNICEF and WFP but as they were slow to arrive from the date of the start of the application they were not used in a time critical way. For FAO, WHO and UNFPA the slowness of application process slowed the response programmes.

The response capacity was strengthened in so far as more was able to be done with more funding. But the funding was too slow to be as effective as normal disaster response would require.

Although there are no clusters for the sharing of information on a sectoral basis there are general coordination meetings which all agencies attend and use to share information on the situation and the implementation of their programmes. The CERF is not specifically discussed at these meetings as far as constructing a CERF application is concerned but needs and priorities are discussed. UN agencies are then able to use this information for compiling their CERF application at the UN country team level. There have not been real time evaluations as such, but there is an on-going awareness of the situation due to the agencies' presence in the field with their implementing partners and the activities of other organisations such as the French Red Cross, Action against Hunger (ACF) Spain and Save the Children fund.

The rapid response funding for 2009 taking 56 days to arrive from the beginning of the process and 65 days in 2010 did not allow agencies to jump start their activities. The question was asked if there was any subsequent loss of life due to the time taken for funds to arrive. The answer was clearly no as neither WFP or UNICEF were impeded by the wait for

funding as they had funds from other donors and access to their own emergency funds they could use if the situation deteriorated further.

Année	Window	budget planifié (US\$)	Budget exécuté	Taux d'exécution	Start date	NB. jours	Approbation	NB. jours	LoUsigné	Nb j.	Fonds effectivement en agences
2006	U/F	374,500	371,164	99.11%			07-Sep	7	14-Sep	27 j.	11-Oct
2007	U/F	250,000	227,525	91.01%			11-Sep	7	18-Sep	41 j.	08-Nov
2008	RR	689,615	602,805	87.41%			03-Jul	12	15-Jul	31 j.	16-Sep
2009	RR	426,994	393,133	92.07%	24-Aug	42	05-Oct	8	13-Oct	6 j.	19-Oct
2010	RR	460,000	426,994	92.82%	03-Aug	42	10-Sep	7	21-Sep	16 j.	07-Oct

Details from FAO of the time span for each part of the process of accessing CERF grants

Mauritania situation from the 2009 CHAP

Mauritania is a typical example of all the West African countries which are afflicted by extremely high poverty rates, have been suffering from climatic changes, natural disasters, conflict, and political crises. The theme of the 2009 West Africa regional Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) for 2009 was focussed on the soaring food and fuel price crisis and its impact on:

- Food Security and Nutrition,
- Health,
- Protection,
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Also included were coordination/information management/support services as it was felt that an analysis between the different sectors was much needed. The rising food prices posed a threat to food and nutrition security in Mauritania, particularly for children, pregnant and lactating women. The challenge was and still is access to high-quality foods with adequate macro and micronutrient contents, especially for the most vulnerable group of children aged 0 to 24 months. Nutrition security also requires safe water, hygiene and sanitation, proper care, and access to quality health-care services. The Mauritanian government reacted to the price increases by waiving tariffs and taxes on food imports and launching actions, such as the Special Intervention Programme (*Programme special d'intervention*).

Agency	Mauritania 2009 CHAP sectors	Amount
FAO	Food Security	\$962,500
UNICEF	Emergency nutrition for child survival	\$2,889,000
UNFPA	Strengthening reproductive health services	\$444,050
UNHCR	Durable solutions for Mauritanien refugees	\$2,033,986
UN Agencies, NGOs and RC	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene under the REACH programme	\$117,700
WFP	Food insecurity response mechanisms	\$38,291,798
	Total	\$44,739,034

Due to the number of regional programmes being run for West Africa, it is quite difficult to quantify in financial terms the real funding support for Mauritania from the 2009 CHAP. Looking at funding from all donors for Mauritania in 2009 on FTS and then checking other countries in West Africa it would seem that donations on the Mauritania list are unique to

Mauritania even though some of it is marked as West Africa. However, with funding that goes to the regional offices of UN agencies in Dakar there is no way of knowing how the funding is divided between West African countries. However the \$38,291,798 required by WFP constituted 86 per cent of the funding required for the Mauritania specific programmes.

The response to the CHAP produced \$25,247,760 from 10 donors. Of the 10 donors CERF was the third largest after ECHO and USAID.

ECHO	\$3,844,809	25% ²
USAID	\$3,832,602	25%
CERF	\$2,174,497	14%

Value added of the CERF

Since 2006 the CERF has allocated \$8,836,038 to UN agencies in Mauritania for 24 projects. Of this, 79 per cent went to WFP, FAO and the nutritional support programmes of UNICEF.

Agency	CERF contribution 2006-2010	% of CERF funding by Agency
Food & Agriculture Organisation	\$2,201,109	25%
World Health Organisation	\$788,055	9%
United Nations Children's Fund	\$1,833,186	21%
World Food Programme	\$2,883,616	33%
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	\$653,235	7%
United Nations Population Fund	\$476,837	5%

During 2009, the CERF funded five projects of UN agencies from the rapid response window, all for food or nutrition.

Agency ³	Total 2009 funding	CERF 2009 funding	% of total funding from CERF
Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	\$426,994	\$426,994	100%
World Health Organization	\$233,262	\$233,260	100%
World Food Programme	\$3,389,737	\$997,000	24.41%
United Nations Population Fund	\$315,762	\$315,762	100%
United Nations Children's Fund	\$3,592,461	\$201,481	5.60%

Note, the reallocation of WFP funds as shown on FTS is for the West Africa region and not just Mauritania. The figure used in this table is from WFP financial sources.

There are two specific points which the figures above raise;

1. The funding allocations each year are for the same sectors at the same time of the year, food and nutrition, this is when a harvest fails or is not adequate or floods reduce or wash out a harvest. As already stated, the CERF is not the long-term answer to this problem but effective development activities by the four UN Agencies

²Taking into account that the WFP carry over funding had been donated in 2008

³All financial data taken from FTS

involved with the REACH⁴ programme and the Government of Mauritania. However, the problem is not just food and nutrition but also access where there are groups of people living in locations without roads where it is difficult to reach during periods of crisis.

2. Three of the agencies, WHO, UNFPA and FAO, in 2009 took 100 per cent of the programme funding from the CERF according to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS)⁵. Some UN agencies, such as WHO, do have additional funds which have a different funding system to some of the other UN agencies but details are not available on FTS. It would seem that being recipients of CERF grants was not used with donors to try and leverage additional funds for these programmes⁶.

Recommendations:

The strategic planning of long-term and annual programmes should better take into account the annual food and nutrition deficits by FAO, WHO and UNFPA. Donors other than the CERF should be approached to support programmes early in the year to reduce the effects of poor harvest and not to wait for a crisis to evolve. The CERF could possibly then consider a focus on any underfunded aspects and not wait to use the rapid response window, or, the rapid response would be less critical for agencies that have other funding for their programmes. Overall costs would be lower and the disaster aspect could be reduced.

UN agencies should not be taking 100% of their emergency funding from the CERF just because it is “easy” money as was suggested in one interview. Other donors even if their application process is more difficult and time consuming should be approached and involved in risk reduction, pre-planning support for the anticipated problems.⁷ In this way the timeliness element would also become less important for the CERF grant application process.

Criteria for the allocation of CERF grant

Mauritania was not selected for under-funded emergency grants during 2009 or 2010 so to make any comments here on this window would be based on supposition. The criteria for rapid response funding is clearly understood by the UN country team in Mauritania who focus their efforts on being able to access grants for support to the annual food security problems from this window. Clearly the criterion for the rapid response grants were correct with a crisis that threatened lives. It was not a sudden onset emergency in so far as it built over time to become a crisis situation. The application was chosen from the core humanitarian programmes that are prioritised by the RC/HC and the UN country team. The package of grants was based on an assessment of need and the funds once agreed were disbursed in accordance with the CERF regulations.

It is appreciated that CERF and donors cannot put into place preparedness stocks for all eventualities around the world. However for countries in the grouping that Mauritania represents and it is known that there will be a crisis a number of months prior to it taking

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5 <http://fts.unocha.org/>

6 Further points on fund raising will be discussed in the umbrella report for the 3 country reviews

7 As with footnote 5

effect due to the data compiled by WFP and FAO, it would seem logical to give support earlier on the basis of time critical funds to prevent escalation, reduce impact & costs. All grants were as “life-saving” as could be expected and fitted the CERF criterion but many other people not supported by CERF grants could easily fit into life with dignity in Mauritania

To ensure adherence to its mandated role the CERF defines “life-saving” by using the basic humanitarian principle of placing the people and communities affected in the focus and applying a rights-based approach traced back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular the right to life with dignity. In Mauritania, it was felt that the criteria for eligibility of CERF funding were a little too loose as life with dignity is not necessarily life-saving. This could clearly be a point of discussion at the annual meeting of the CERF advisory group with comments from a broad spectrum of UN country teams.

Life with dignity as a concept created a wide range of discussions as clearly it means something different in each country. Life with dignity has to be related to the context of the country to ensure that life-saving is really life-saving and not just life with dignity.

The prioritisation of which sectors would be incorporated by the UN country team for the CERF grant application was done on the basis of the available information on the developing food and nutritional crisis and in line with the country strategy.

Recommendation:

The life-saving criteria for CERF applications should be reconsidered to include something on the context of the way people are living within any particular country or region. This may be clear in the CERF secretariat, but it seems not to be so clear in the field and further clarification is needed on how the context of the country is applied. This may mean a slight tightening of the criteria to ensure that the term “dignity” is not exploited for funding which could have been sought prior to crisis developing by some UN agencies. It is interesting to note that the CERF Two-Year Evaluation recommended that the specific context should be considered when applying the life-saving criteria. But this is not clearly understood in all countries as the context of each country, unless clearly defined, will mean different things to different people.

Timeliness of CERF funding

In 2009 it took 56 days for the rapid response funds to be available with the UN Agencies to be used in Mauritania.

- For FAO it took 42 days from 24 August to 5 October to complete the details of the application and to have the technical details agreed with the OCHA regional office in Dakar and then to have approval from the CERF secretariat on the contents of the application. See previous table on page 5.
- It took a further eight days until 13 October for the Letter of Understanding to be signed by the headquarters of the UN Agencies – running total of 50 days.
- It took an additional six days for the funds to be available with the UN Agencies on the 19th October.

- The CERF Secretariat has different data on the dates with an average of 13 days from the submission of the application to approval by the ERC (i.e. 18 September until 7/8 October). However, this is still a six week process from the start date of 24 August for rapid response grants to be approved with still the process of the LoU and the transfer of funds to be added. No matter which way you look at it, this is far too long for the process. Taking the regional office out of the system should improve the timeliness dramatically.

This is considered too slow for rapid response funding with the main part of the time lost in reviews of the contents of the application with the regional office. It has now been confirmed that the OCHA regional office is for technical support and needs to know what is happening in Mauritania. However, the reviews on the content of the application and the level of funding to be allocated are carried out with the CERF Secretariat.

For FAO, the period for a similar rapid response CERF grant in 2010 was slower at 65 days (please see the table on page 5 for details). This includes a long pre-submission period of 42 days where an agreement was being reached with the regional OCHA office, seven days for the letter of understanding to be signed and a further period delay for the transfer of funds on 7 October.

Despite the fact that these CERF applications should not be planned as a response from the beginning of the year there is clearly a problem with the system taking 56 and 65 days for FAO's application. If life-saving depended on these funds then they would not have achieved their objectives as they did not promote early action or enhance response to time critical requirements. The CERF Secretariat has different data and dates also for 2010 but as in 2009 was the long delay with the regional office being a part of the process which appeared to have slowed the process. Now that any application will go directly to the CERF Secretariat it will be interesting to see the change in timeliness.

Using the funding within a three-month period is very difficult and the feeling of all concerned was that this period needs to be expanded to six months.

Recommendation

The CERF application should be negotiated directly with the CERF Secretariat from day one of the compilation of the application and the OCHA regional office informed. Failing this the OCHA regional office would need to send an officer to work directly with the UN country team in Mauritania immediately that they are aware that an application is to be made.

Inclusiveness and Transparency of the allocation process

The CERF application is agreed by the UN country team chaired by the RC/HC. The RC has the final decision on what is included in the application and has in the past rejected elements that have not fitted into the country strategy. In reality, it was considered an internal UN discussion that decided the key ways forward and a small group elaborated the proposal which is cleared by / shared with Government counterparts. The Government has to approve the programmes before they can be implemented and in Mauritania it is felt that the Government also delays the process of asking for or agreeing to assistance until it is very late.

There is no functioning cluster system in Mauritania but general co-ordination meetings between the functioning organisations supplies a forum for the exchange of information.

Priorities are agreed based on assessments carried out by the Agencies. WFP tends to be the lead agency as they have offices and infrastructure in the areas where there is habitual food insecurity.

NGOs are not consulted on their opinions for the CERF application but the information that they share at coordination meetings is used by the UN country team to support their own assessment of the situation. NGOs feel that they should also have access to CERF grants but feel that there is no point in raising the question this will not be agreed to. This may well be a part of a resolution and decision of Member States but it doesn't change the way that NGOs feel about

Recommendation

NGOs should be brought more into the process of information sharing on the priorities in the field when a CERF application is being prepared as they have a greater field presence and more first-hand information. This is not to say they should make decisions which are clearly those of the RC/HC and the UN country team. This would assist with the level of transparency and inclusiveness.

Reporting and accountability

Reporting is coordinated by a focal point in the RC/HC and was not considered to be a problem by the person who was responsible during 2009. There is a new RC/HC in Mauritania so first-hand information was not available on the usefulness of the report for accountability purposes for that office. There is no separate monitoring or reporting system for CERF-funded projects and they are covered by the UN Agencies normal system. However as for some of the Agencies the CERF allocations constitutes 100 per cent of the programme funding these systems support exclusively the monitoring and reporting needs of the CERF.

Despite attempts to organise meetings with the National Authorities nobody in an informed position was available. Consequently, no information was available on the Government's view of the actions being taken. However, for programmes to be run in Mauritania they have to agree. They are therefore aware of what is proposed to the CERF for support.

Interviews with NGOs who are implementing partners with various UN Agencies indicated that the time available for the implementation to be too short. By the time they receive the funding they have little more than 30 days to implement the projects they are responsible for. Even though they are aware that extensions of a further three months is possible for many of the programmes/projects there is a time element which is critical and therefore every effort is made to ensure completion on time. However they all indicated that the reporting needs were not difficult to comply with.

Support to humanitarian reform and response

The incoming RC and the Heads of Agencies interviewed felt that the application and prioritization procedure for the CERF increases the level of information sharing and coordination which benefits the UN country team. It was felt by the incoming RC and the Heads of Agencies interviewed that the role played by the RC/HC as chairing the UN country team that decides the activities in CERF applications and as the final decision maker considerably reinforces this position.

Additional issues

Disaster Preparedness

When it is known that a disaster is imminent then it is felt that there should be the possibility for pre-funding to ensure that response capabilities were strengthened. Additionally mitigation and risk reduction activities are not funded by CERF even though such actions can be life-saving. It was felt that a disaster preparedness window could reduce overall costs of responding to a crisis situation and still conform to the life-saving criteria of CERF.

There are food security problems caused by drought or flooding in Mauritania each year. These problems start to occur when the level of productivity of the harvest starts to become apparent about the end of July and in August. The numbers of people to be supported can vary but the location of the problem tends to be approximately the same general region close to the Senegal border, even though it is not always the same specific area. Part of the problem is a lack of infrastructure: no roads or transport systems to move commodities to difficult access locations. However, the main problems are:

- ✓ The price of food and other commodities,
- ✓ Availability of food and clean water,
- ✓ Access to health support systems.

Systems have been developed to ensure access is possible to people even in the most difficult locations, but this takes a lot of time. Therefore, if the CERF had a preparedness grant that allowed the pre-positioning (not replenishing) of some basic food requirements the level of the crisis could be less intense, lives could be saved and the level of suffering could be reduced. Obviously this is not the ideal solution which requires effective development activities to link and reduce the level of the problem. This is why the REACH programme has been started during the past two years but is still struggling for acceptance with the Government Authorities. REACH is designed to bring together UNICEF, FAO, WFP and WHO with 11 Ministries to tackle malnutrition at its source and has developed a five-year plan. But this needs the support of the Government and even then will take some years to become effective.

Recommendation

A disaster preparedness element or window to reduce the impact of an impending disaster could be considered:

- a. This would still be life-saving and could also be seen as saving livelihoods and therefore reduce the overall costs of humanitarian response.
- b. This is where CERF could really be able to say that they are reinforcing capacity but this should not take the place of present capacity-building activities and only used at the time of an impending disaster.

The Loan Facility

The “Loan Facility” of \$50 million has not been used globally since 2008. Talking with operations managers they indicated that they would never use funds that they didn’t have due to the possibility that donors could change their minds and not donate. This would then

create funding problems that could last well into the next year. Therefore in principle operations managers do not start work without the assurance of having the funding in the bank. On this basis, the loan facility would appear to be of little use and could be considered for alternative purposes.

Recommendation

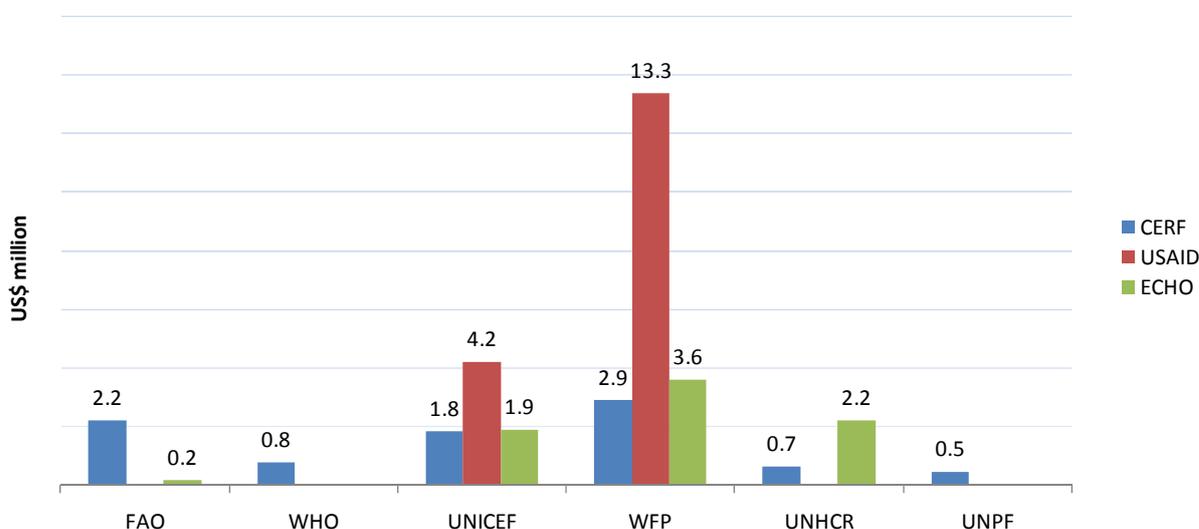
The loan facility should be stopped and the funding made available for other purposes. This could be further support to either or both of the other two windows of rapid response or underfunded emergencies.

Other donors

There seems to be little use of the CERF as a promotional aspect with other donors in Mauritania. In fact, some agencies appear to not be particularly active where other donors are concerned. Some comments made were quite open that to access funds from some donors was too time consuming and too difficult as these donors asked for too much information.

The locations for these food and nutrition programmes are generally the same each year. There may be a change of one region to another but they are generally all in the agricultural belt in the southern part of the country towards the river Senegal. The numbers of people to be supported are similar and the actions and activities are generally the same each year. On this basis the funding for better support could be sought much earlier and food and equipment could be pre-positioned prior to the situation becoming a disaster. When looking at the CERF funding against the funding from other key donors, particularly ECHO and USAID who are the largest donors, some of the UN agencies confirmed that accessing those other funds was too difficult. This seems to not be just a Mauritania problem but more a problem for some UN Agencies. When looking at the following graph of funding it seems that only UNICEF and WFP have a balance of support from a broader range of donors. However, it is worth noting that FAO received \$480,000 from USAID's Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and \$175,000 from ECHO during 2010.

Volume of CERF funding compared to that of USAID and ECHO for the period 2006-2009.
Source: OCHA FTS.



Therefore, the value added of the CERF's rapid response window is undermined as it is anticipated by FAO, WHO and UNFPA to be available to run their emergency programmes. There is limited or no attempt to access other funding which may require more effort and time. In this situation, as CERF funding is easier to access, it makes the situation worse as mitigation and risk reduction activities which could be attempted are not carried out with other funding. This may seem like a sweeping conclusion however all the indicators and comments made during in-country interviews support this line of thinking. Additionally WHO acknowledged openly that this has been the case but will be changed.

Training on the CERF systems

The majority of Agencies interviewed did not have anybody who had been through CERF training. Agencies should be encouraged to send staff to CERF trainings to improve capacity and understanding of CERF procedures. This could help ensure faster and better allocation of CERF funds.

Recommendation

The focal point for the CERF applications should attend the next training round on the CERF systems and ideally other Agencies staff who will be involved with using the system. This would help not just as better understanding of the ways of working but also to know the people to link with when a CERF application is being made.

Review of CERF funding

The review of CERF funding should be carried out as early as possible during the following year to ensure that the people involved during the year being reviewed are still available. Carrying out a review for 2009 during November and December of 2010 has undoubtedly missed the benefits of this institutional memory. The period of time for the review in any specific country is too short at six days with no field trips to meet people involved with field coordination, those involved with the implementation of programmes or to meet any beneficiaries. Ideally, a period of eight days spread either side of a weekend would help to ensure that people with travel plans are more likely to be available for interview.

Recommendations

1. The strategic planning of long term and annual programmes should better take into account the annual food and nutrition deficits and donors other than the CERF could be approached to give support in partnership with the Government of Mauritania. The CERF could then be used to focus on any underfunded aspects and not wait for the disaster to occur and use the rapid response window. Overall, costs would be lower and the disaster aspect could be reduced.
2. UN Agencies should not be taking 100 per cent of their funding from the CERF just because it is "easy" money as was suggested in one interview. Other donors even if their application process is more difficult and time consuming should be approached and involved in risk reduction, pre-planning support for the anticipated problems.
3. The life-saving criteria for CERF applications should be reconsidered to include something on the context of the way people are living within any particular country or region. This may be clear in the CERF secretariat however it seems not to be so

clear in the field and further clarification is needed on how the context of the country is applied. This may mean a slight tightening of the criteria to ensure that the term “dignity” is not exploited for funding which could have been sought prior to crisis developing by some UN agencies. It is interesting to note that the CERF Two-Year Evaluation recommended that the specific context should be considered when applying the life-saving criteria. But this is not clearly understood in all countries as the context of each country, unless clearly defined, will mean different things to different people.

4. The CERF application should be negotiated directly with the CERF Secretariat from day one of the compilation of the application and the OCHA regional office in Dakar informed. When there is a larger than usual crisis that the UN country team is required to respond to, support from the OCHA regional office with an in-country presence should be considered by the country team and requested if they feel it appropriate.
5. NGO’s should be brought more into the process of information sharing on the priorities in the field when a CERF application is being prepared as that have a greater field presence and more first-hand information. This is not to say they should make decisions which are clearly those of the RC/HC and the UN country team. This would assist with the level of transparency and inclusiveness.
6. A disaster preparedness element or window to reduce the impact of an impending disaster could be considered. This could be based on an agreement with the national authorities of a recipient country where there is national support to such an element to diminish the level of dependency on CERF funding.
 - a. This would still be life-saving and could also be seen as saving livelihoods and therefore reduce the overall costs of humanitarian response.
 - b. This is where the CERF could really be able to say that they are reinforcing capacity but this should not take the place of present capacity building activities and only used at the time of an impending disaster.
7. The “third window” of the loan facility should be stopped and the funding made available for other purposes. This could be further support to either or both of the other two windows of rapid response or underfunded emergencies.
8. The focal point for the CERF applications should attend the next training round on the CERF systems and ideally other Agencies staff who will be involved with using the system. This would help not just as better understanding of the ways of working but also to know the people to link with when a CERF application is being made.

People met in Mauritania

Name	Position	Organisation
Coumba Mar Gadio	RC/HC	UNDP
Sara Rodríguez-Argüelles	Special assistant to the RC	UNDP
Christian Skoog	Country Representative	UNICEF
Ines Lezama	Nutrition Specialist	UNICEF
Nicolas Reuge	Chief of Education Programme	UNICEF
Ana Pérez	Reach Coordinator	UNDP
Olivier Flament	Head of Programmes	WFP
Souleman Boukar	Principle Economist	UNDP
Mario Gomez	Coordinator of Emergency Programmes	FAO
Cheikh Ould Maloumould Toinsi	Head of Programmes	UNHCR
Luca Curci	Protection Officer	UNHCR
Massimo Scalorbi	Head of rural development and environment	European Commission
Emmanuelle Huchon	Head of Delegation	French Red Cross
Alain Sitchet	Programme Coordinator	F-OMD
Baba Fall Ould Yedaly	Executive Director	Au Secours
Dr Amar Mohamed Lemine	Medical Technical Advisor	UNFPA
Dr Kane Amadou Racine	Head of programmes for food security and nutrition	WHO
Dr. Jean Pierre Baptiste	Country Representative	WHO
Ilaria Carnevali	Deputy Resident Representative Program	UNDP