



## **Independent Reviews of the Value Added by the CERF to the Humanitarian Response in the Horn of Africa, the Ivoirian Refugee Crisis and the Philippines**

*Summary by the CERF secretariat, October 2012*

### **Introduction**

Following endorsement by the CERF Advisory Group of the draft Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) at its July 2010 meeting, the CERF Secretariat finalized the PAF in August 2010. Amongst other things, the PAF foresees three to five country-level reviews of the value added of the CERF per year to be conducted by independent evaluation experts.

In 2012, the CERF secretariat commissioned Tasneem Mowjee, Glyn Taylor, Barnaby Willitts-King and Marie Spaak, independent humanitarian consultants, to review the value added of the CERF to the humanitarian response to the Horn of Africa drought, the Ivoirian refugee crisis and the complex needs in the Philippines. Field visits for the reviews to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia<sup>1</sup> and the Philippines took place between May and July 2012.

The reviews employed the methodology tested in the pilot study of the value added of the CERF in Kenya in early 2010. The reviews largely focussed on activities in 2011 based on the 2011 annual report of the RC/HCs submitted in March 2012. Countries were chosen so as to reflect recipients of both large and small amounts of CERF funding and natural as well as man-made disasters. In a departure from previous years, the CERF secretariat included two regional reviews.

- **Horn of Africa:** A review of CERF's value added in the region was commissioned for a number of reasons. Notably, the drought affecting Djibouti, Ethiopia Kenya and Somalia, amongst other countries, was a regional problem. It was, therefore, of interest to determine how different countries had utilised the CERF and to what extent a regional approach emerged. In addition, CERF had provided considerable funding over the course of 2011 - US\$128.2 million. While several reviews and evaluations of the humanitarian response had taken place, none provided much meaningful information on the CERF or its contribution to the response.
- **Cote d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries:** Similar to the Horn of Africa, the review of Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Ghana offered an opportunity to examine how different countries responded to a regional challenge. In this case, this was the forced displacement resulting from post-election violence in Cote d'Ivoire in early 2011 the response to which the CERF provided \$25.5 million.
- **Philippines:** The CERF secretariat had originally intended to commission a study of CERF's value added to the complex, conflict-related humanitarian needs in

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<sup>1</sup> Additional desk research and telephone interviews were undertaken to review a regional grant to UNHCR covering Benin, Guinea and Togo.

Yemen. Due to security considerations, however, it was not possible to conduct the study in Yemen as planned. The Philippines was chosen as a replacement in light of the mix of needs due to rapid onset natural disasters as well as a longer-standing conflict-related emergency. In addition, this allowed for the first PAF study to be conducted in Asia.

### **Common Findings**

Although the studies each focussed on a specific country, several common findings emerged across the reviews:

- **OCHA and CERF secretariat support key in preparation of CERF requests:** The presence of an OCHA office was associated with an overall stronger CERF process, from prioritization to reporting. OCHA surge, for example by an OCHA regional office, to countries without a permanent OCHA presence was also appreciated. Correspondingly, smaller countries, such as Djibouti, expressed a desire for more CERF-related guidance and an OCHA presence in the form of a Humanitarian Advisor. A number of field level partners also expressed a desire to receive information from the CERF secretariat on available funding envelopes for rapid response submissions earlier in the submission process.
- **CERF as a rapid source of funds:** Reviews consistently highlighted that the CERF secretariat was quick to process applications once formally submitted. Where applications were submitted early in the crisis, CERF funds thus enabled a timely response. This was, however, not always the case. For example, the review for Somalia argued that although CERF funding arrived slightly before the general upswing in funding a CERF submission could have been made earlier in the year.
- **CERF key for smaller emergencies:** CERF support was crucial in enabling a humanitarian response in smaller and less visible emergencies, such as Philippines, Djibouti and Ghana, where there is a limited international donor presence. In those countries, CERF acted as one of the largest sources of humanitarian funds<sup>2</sup>.
- **Limited distinction between RR and UFE window in protracted emergencies:** In countries with slow-onset or protracted emergencies, many interviewees saw little difference between the RR and UFE windows of CERF. The reviewers agreed that in those circumstances, they were essentially used interchangeably by field staff.
- **Need to maximize complementarity between CERF and country-based pooled funds:** In keeping with findings from previous PAF reviews and the five-year evaluation of CERF, several reviews noted that there was a certain complementarity between CERF and country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) when it came to selecting recipients (e.g. prioritizing CERF for UN agencies and CBPFs for NGOs) and timing allocations. There was, however, scope for increasing complementarity even

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<sup>2</sup> CERF was the largest source of humanitarian funding for Djibouti in 2011 representing more than 30 per cent of all funding recorded by the Financial tracking Service (FTS). In Ghana CERF was the second largest funding source in support of the refugee crises with 44 per cent of total funding and in the Philippines CERF was found to be one of three top humanitarian donors since 2006.

further, for example by using CBPF structures, such as Advisory Boards, for supporting CERF processes.

- **Lack of common monitoring:** A number of reviews noted that there could be substantial collaboration during the assessments of needs and prioritization of interventions when preparing CERF submissions. This collaboration did not, however, necessarily extend to common monitoring of projects once they were funded. In addition, sharing of information on the implementation status of CERF-funded projects in inter-agency forums rarely occurred.
- **Lack of a joint process surrounding the preparation of the annual CERF report:** Reviews noted that the preparation of the annual report by the RC/HC on the use of CERF funds largely revolved around agencies submitting inputs into the report for compilation. It was not treated as an opportunity to jointly review the response.
- **Limited involvement of NGO partners in CERF processes:** A number of the reviews noted limited engagement of NGOs in the CERF process at country level. This was found to be due to factors related to country level structures and processes as well as to a general lack of interest since CERF was perceived as a UN mechanism. This is in line with findings from previous PAF reviews.

### **Linkages between Findings and the CERF Secretariat's Workplan**

The common issues identified in the PAF reviews overlap with the existing priority areas of the CERF secretariat's workplan for 2012-2013. As such, initiatives seeking to address a number of the issues identified are already underway. In addition, a number of specific deliverables in the CERF workplan for fourth quarter of 2012 are directly related to the findings of the reviews:

- The CERF secretariat is working on developing specific guidance to support country-level CERF prioritisation processes. Development of the guidance is underway and field testing is expected to be undertaken in the fourth quarter of 2012 after which the guidance will be finalized and officially launched.
- The CERF secretariat has also developed guidance and a template for country-level CERF After Action Reviews (AAR). The aim of AARs is to encourage country-level joint learning and to strengthen the collaborative process around the preparation of the annual CERF report. The AARs will be piloted and tested in a few selected countries during fourth quarter of 2012 after which a broader roll-out is expected.
- The CERF secretariat is also in the process of preparing improved guidance on harmonisation between CERF and country-based pooled funds (CBPFs). To inform the development of the guidance the CERF secretariat has prepared an overview paper taking stock of the main findings on CERF and CBPF complementarity from a variety of reports, studies and evaluations, both externally mandated and commissioned by the CERF secretariat or OCHA.

- In addition, the CERF secretariat has for some time explored opportunities to establish appropriate funding envelopes for rapid response requests based on the type of emergency, the number of beneficiaries, the specific country context, the funding prospect and other factors. The recent PAF reviews have highlighted a need by field-level actors to get an accurate indication of an eventual rapid response funding envelope as early in the process as possible in order to make the preparation of a CERF submission more effective and faster. The CERF secretariat will, during last quarter of 2012, try to identify possible options for achieving this and test this with selected field focal points.

### **Summary of Findings and Recommendations by Report**

The sections below outline the main findings and recommendations across the eight country reports. Additional information is available in the country reports themselves<sup>3</sup>. The views expressed are the consultants' own.

#### **Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Liberia**

The country review focused on the use of CERF funds in 2011. These amounted to close to US\$24.5 million from the RR window in response to displacement resulting from post-election in Cote D'Ivoire.

##### *Main Findings:*

- The CERF was found to have played an essential and timely role in enabling agencies to strengthen their response capacities and scale up the humanitarian response to address pressing life-saving needs across a broad range of sectors.
- The CERF was said to have been perceived as an invaluable funding mechanism in all countries, because it was reliable, flexible, rapid, and straightforward and came at critical times.
- The reviewer noted that the CERF secretariat responded positively to all country requests and was appreciated for its responsiveness and speed. Application formats were seen as well suited to emergency contexts and CERF guidance was regarded as helpful.
- CERF funding came at a critical time. Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) requested CERF funds due to extremely low funding levels of the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plans (EHAPs) (3 per cent for Ghana, 6 per cent for Liberia, 21 per cent for Côte d'Ivoire and nothing for Guinea, Togo and Benin) and once it was clear that existing contributions and agencies' own resources were highly insufficient to address existing and expected emergency needs.
- As a result, the CERF was the major donor for refugee response in Ghana and the only external source of funding for the UNHCR projects in Benin, Guinea and Togo. In these two cases in particular, the CERF clearly represented a lifeline. There was, however, no

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unocha.org/cerf/reportsevaluations/evaluations/country-reviews/performance-and-accountability-framework>

clear evidence that CERF funding made it easier for agencies to leverage additional funding from donors for their projects, even though a number of emergency projects did receive subsequent donor contributions.

- The quality of CERF allocation processes in all countries was found to be tied to the strength of the humanitarian coordination mechanisms in place, the commitment of the RC/HC and cluster/sector lead agencies to conduct an inclusive process. Contextual factors, such as insecurity in Côte d'Ivoire at the time of the first allocation, were also highly significant.
- OCHA offices, both regional, through surge support and in-country, were said to have been key in facilitating the CERF processes in support of the RC/HCs. OCHA staff - and UNHCR staff in the case of Liberia - played a convening and advisory role at key steps in the process.
- In terms of CERF's support to humanitarian reform, the review found that CERF had to varying extents strengthened the position of the RC/HCs by putting non-earmarked funding at their disposal at a critical time to use strategically. CERF grants had strengthened the cluster coordinators insofar as they were able to take part in and conduct inclusive processes. Inter-agency and inter-cluster/sector planning and coordination were strengthened through the formulation and implementation of joint projects in the same cluster/sector or involving more than one cluster/sector. However, CERF prioritization processes had tended to be too "top down" and insufficiently inclusive of NGOs except for the formulation of project proposals.
- The CERF secretariat was found to be highly responsive in reviewing proposals and preparing them for approval by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). However, the step requiring the most time was found to be the revision of proposals. In the sub-region this included reprioritizing needs and activities and reducing budgets because the amount available from CERF was lower than that requested initially.
- Agencies were found to have a variety of accountability mechanisms in place, including reporting and monitoring clauses and performance indicators in sub-agreements with partners, and monitoring activities. However, monitoring information remained largely internal, even though updates on project implementation may be a standard feature of coordination meetings.

#### *Recommendations:*

##### To Participating Countries:

- The reviewer recommends that RC/HCs prepare an outline of the initial prioritization and estimate of costs as a basis for consulting the CERF secretariat on the amount available before project proposals are developed.
- HC/RCS should ensure that cluster/sector coordinators have a central role in identifying the most pressing needs and which clusters/sectors and geographical areas should be prioritised by giving clear instructions in this regard. Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) should prioritise on the basis of inter-cluster recommendations.

- Agency country offices should better take into consideration their capacity to implement in a relatively short (six-month Rapid Response) timeframe when they select activities to include in their project. The HCT should identify risks in this respect, including taking into account an agency's past performance, and openly discuss them in order to ensure that essential resources are effectively used and to avoid poor performance.
- RC/HCs should agree with the HCT, within one month of a CERF allocation, on minimum monitoring activities and a system to regularly share project implementation updates and monitoring information.

To the CERF secretariat:

- The CERF secretariat should contribute to improving the inclusiveness and transparency of processes by transforming the "Project prioritization and selection" section of its Rapid Response guidelines into more detailed "Standard Procedures" for all CERF-related tasks with an indicative timeframe for each task and prepare a short overview of good practice in different types of emergency and coordination settings.
- The CERF secretariat should systematically recommend to the RC/HC that a review of project implementation be organised, involving agencies and their implementing partners, at mid-term or a couple of months before the end of the implementation timeframe.
- The CERF secretariat should recommend that RC/HCs tie the preparation of the annual report to an inter-agency workshop in order to maximise learning.

## **The Philippines**

The country review focused on the use of CERF funds in 2011. These amounted to about \$11.3 million from the RR and UFE windows in response to natural disasters. The review also covered the prioritization process for the first UFE round of 2012 in which the Philippines received about \$3.9 million.

### *Main Findings:*

- The CERF was found to have added value to the humanitarian response of UN agencies and IOM in several ways:
  - by providing timely and flexible funding for emergency response,
  - by enabling agencies to leverage other funding,
  - by complementing other donor funding and
  - by setting an example to other donors, by supporting a response to a "forgotten" crisis and filling critical gaps, and
  - by supporting coordination at Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) level.
- However, UN agencies also highlighted the difficulty of financing relevant training and capacity building exercises. Agencies were also seen as going through a lengthy review

and comment process on proposals for UFE funding and felt it would be helpful if the CERF secretariat said “no” earlier in cases where projects couldn’t be funded.

- A number of interviewees argued that it would be helpful to have a country-based pooled fund that could support quick disaster response, particularly by NGOs, and also finance preparedness activities, like pre-positioning stocks.
- In terms of the inclusiveness and transparency of allocation process, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) allocated CERF funding, with the RC/HC playing a strong role in proposing options (based on analysis by OCHA, Humanitarian Action Plan priorities and requests from the government). NGO members of the HCT were present at the CERF allocations but, as observers on the HCT, not all donors were said to have participated in these *ad hoc* HCT meetings.
- In keeping with other review, the study found that the CERF secretariat was generally quick to ensure approval of final proposals and disbursement of funds.

*Main Recommendations:*

- OCHA should work with the Philippine government to support it in reporting its contributions to humanitarian response within the country to FTS.
- OCHA and the CERF secretariat should explore ways to streamline the CERF proposal review process.
- Humanitarian actors in the Philippines should consider the establishment of a country-level ERF, managed by OCHA, to facilitate quick response to small-scale disasters.
- CERF-recipient agencies should ensure that they have mechanisms in place to provide comprehensive reporting on CERF funding.
- CERF-recipient agencies have undertaken a number of lessons-learned exercises. Where these have included CERF-funded projects, they should share the outcomes with the CERF secretariat.
- OCHA Philippines should provide briefings on the CERF, as part of wider briefings, not only to UN agency staff but also to interested government representatives and NGOs.
- CERF recipient agencies should ensure that requirements relating to CERF grants, for example, requesting permission to re-programme funds and prioritising CERF funding within clusters, are shared with all programme managers and cluster leads.
- UN agencies should highlight the contribution of CERF funding to humanitarian response in the Philippines to build support for the fund, particularly amongst government partners.

## Horn of Africa Regional Overview

In a regional synthesis paper covering the Horn of Africa reviews<sup>4</sup>, the authors noted a number of common findings across the countries, differences in context notwithstanding:

- For the most part, CERF allocations were perceived as appropriate and in line with CERF criteria.
- CERF was timely in filling funding gaps in the first half of 2011, but should have been used earlier.
- For the RR window, speed of process was prioritised over inclusivity of decision-making and transparency was consistently less than expected by CERF guidance. That the trade-off of speed over inclusivity worked to the advantage of UN Agencies, through whom the bulk of funding flows, cementing the sense of the CERF as an internal UN funding channel.
- In the three countries with established country-level pooled funds, several prior rounds of allocation had led to the development of mechanisms to interface with local authorities or, in the case of Somalia, to deal with the consequences of the access issues. The two larger funds showed elements of synergy with the CERF, and more so for the UFE.
- Additionally, there was reasonable adherence to reporting requirements but limited added value of the HC's annual report to learning in-country, and no follow up of previous PAF reviews.
- CERF secretariat was widely perceived as responsive and professional in overseeing and facilitating the process.

In terms of the regional nature of the crisis and response, the authors state that, at its most basic level, the crisis could be described as “regional” in the sense that multiple countries were affected in the Horn of Africa. Many of the underlying drivers of climate, poverty and conflict were similar across the region. Economies were formally and informally linked across the region. Although displacement across borders could be described as a regional issue, it was possibly better viewed as one of cross-border significance between two (or sometimes three) countries.

The reality of the response, however, was an explicit focus and centre of gravity and coordination structure in each country. Each country in the region had a very distinct political make up and complex relationships with its neighbours. Each response competed as well as cooperated with the others. A regional appeal was launched but this was more a compilation of each country's response rather than an attempt to build a strategy across the region.

Institutionally, agencies and the system found it difficult to establish cross-border monitoring, information sharing and programming. Better early warning and pre-emption of cross-border flows would have helped with programming and camp planning.

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<sup>4</sup> Only a draft version of the regional synthesis paper was available at the time of writing.



Further use could have been made of a regional Humanitarian Coordinator – as appointed to the Sahel crisis in 2012 – to provide opportunities to focus on practical regional steps. However, in the Sahel the affected countries were more similar than those in the Horn of Africa.

## **Djibouti**

The Djibouti review, along with the ones on Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, was part of a regional review of the value added of CERF to humanitarian needs in the Horn of Africa. The review focused on the use of CERF funds in 2011 which amounted to \$6.1 million from the RR and UFE windows. Projects aimed to respond to the Horn of Africa drought and meet the humanitarian needs of refugees from Somalia.

### *Main Findings:*

- In 2011, CERF was the largest humanitarian donor to Djibouti, ahead of the USA and ECHO, providing around 30 per cent of humanitarian funding received in the country.
- CERF was found to have added value to the humanitarian response in Djibouti by:
  - Serving as donor of last resort in resource scarce environment.
  - Filling gaps while agencies mobilize funds from other sources.
  - Responding rapidly to a worsening situation.
  - Establishing humanitarian response capacity.
  - Enabling agencies to leverage other funds.
- Allocations were viewed as appropriate in terms of both priorities and sums allocated. However, interviewees pointed to a need for more guidance and support from the CERF secretariat on how to manage the prioritisation process.
- CERF had played a crucial role in catalysing the structures of humanitarian reform in Djibouti, which did not exist before 2011, and strengthening the HC's role in coordinating humanitarian action among agencies and advocating with the Government.
- Timeliness benchmarks on the CERF process were met in Djibouti. Taken as a whole, these showed a rapid process once proposals had been finalised.
- Djibouti had benefited from being included in the Horn of Africa Appeal, both by drawing attention to Djibouti in comparison to its larger neighbours and in attracting regionally earmarked funds that could be directed towards the country. There was, however, limited regional coordination between Djibouti and UN country teams in other countries.

### *Main Recommendations:*

- The CERF secretariat should develop further material and guidance to support prioritisation and allocation discussions, providing examples of good practice and options for processes and criteria to be used.
- OCHA should provide a full-time Humanitarian Affairs Officer to support the RC and coordination through the HCT and clusters as well as CAP processes and advocacy towards the Government.
- Relevant OCHA sections should consider further support/training on CERF, clusters and CAP to benefit the development of these mechanisms and tools.

## **Ethiopia**

As part of the Horn of Africa regional review, the Ethiopia study focused on the use of CERF funds in 2011. These amounted to about \$56.5 million from the RR and UFE windows in response to drought and to meet the humanitarian needs of refugees hosted in Ethiopia.

### *Main Findings:*

- CERF was found to have played an important role in Ethiopia, particularly in the close coordination with funding from the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) also managed by OCHA. It added value in terms of the absolute availability of resources, filling gaps in time and in specific underfunded sectors. CERF was found to respond in a timely manner, meeting PAF performance benchmarks.
- However, the review also found low levels of ownership of CERF in Ethiopia arguing that agencies see it as an entitlement because it formed a relatively small part of some agencies' resource mobilisation strategies.
- While the process of CERF allocation reflected priority needs and gaps, it was not as inclusive a process as envisaged in the CERF guidelines. There was, however, little appetite to integrate CERF more with the HRF, though good alignment occurred at a practical level.
- More had to be done in terms of regional coordination to address cross-border concerns, such as the Horn of Africa drought. For example, cross-border early warning and information sharing had to be improved. For the CERF specifically, for large crises there could be a benefit to more frequent short term deployments to support decision making in New York.
- The merit-based approach for allocating half of the UFE funds instituted by the HC was seen as the foundation of a sound approach but there was room for further strengthening it, particularly in terms of greater clarity and openness over the process and the rules.

### *Main Recommendations:*

- UN agencies should develop stronger regional coordination based on where this could add value to country responses.

- OCHA Ethiopia should ensure that CERF processes are discussed in clusters, among cluster leads and by the EHCT, and that these discussions are explicitly connected to OCHA planning.
- CERF Secretariat should continue to offer short term deployments/surge capacity to support regions/countries experiencing major crises in order to strengthen context awareness and decision making in New York.
- OCHA Ethiopia should circulate and discuss draft protocols for the UFE merit-based approach.
- CERF Secretariat should communicate via agency CERF focal points how much detail is expected in proposal narratives and the process for discussing proposals.
- CERF should minimise the multiple rounds of “back and forth” between New York and the country through strategic use of teleconferences to resolve issues which are often of perception relating to the country context
- CERF Secretariat should explore annual advanced workshops for experienced CERF country focal points.

## **Kenya**

As part of the Horn of Africa regional review, the Kenya study focused on the use of CERF funds in 2011. These amounted to \$22.6 million from the RR and UFE windows in response to humanitarian needs related to drought and refugee influxes from Somalia.

### *Main Findings:*

- The author argued that CERF in Kenya could be considered an effective tool for the part of the system it principally served, that is the UN-led, sector based system for non-refugee programming.
- Allocation processes were largely perceived to be inclusive and transparent through the system of sectoral groups. Where the CERF was directed to refugee programming, UNHCR’s internal systems and field level coordination functions were the default. By definition these were less inclusive and transparent and sit apart from “reformed” processes.
- The CERF was well regarded by its interlocutors in government, although they played little part in the technical process of allocation. Overall, there was a strong sense that the lack of consistent leadership on the part of government undermined the possibility of more alignment with UN response mechanisms more broadly.
- Interviews for the Kenya and Somalia PAF studies, in the field and in Headquarters, acknowledged that at some point the operational contexts in the Horn of Africa made the RR and UFE windows almost interchangeable.

- The CERF secretariat met, or was close to meeting, tight deadlines for processing, especially for the RR window. When placed in the context of the drought response overall, the CERF was acknowledged as having had an impact in disbursing money marginally ahead of the upswing of donor funding following the declaration of emergency. There was a consensus among interviewees, with hindsight, that the request for RR funding should have been made earlier in the year.
- The author noted a lack of joint processes surrounding the preparation the preparation of the annual RC/HC report on the use of CERF funds.

*Main Recommendations:*

- The author recommended that OCHA Kenya and the CERF secretariat review and follow up the recommendations from the Kenya country study of the CERF five-year evaluation. Notably, recommendations about ensuring higher complementarity between CERF and the Kenya ERF, consultations with government counterparts in prioritization and a more pro-active approach to sharing results with government and donors were highlighted.
- The author noted limited follow-up to the 2010 pilot PAF study conducted in Kenya. He, therefore, recommended that CERF secretariat ensure that recommendations from PAF country studies which are accepted by both the secretariat and country offices be followed up formally.
- Even though the CERF secretariat was quick to process applications once submitted, the author concluded that the overall response and corresponding application to the CERF RR window should have been launched earlier in the year. He, therefore, recommended that OCHA Kenya and the CERF secretariat evaluate the use of the CERF in 2012 for early response, with a view to learning lessons for future events in Kenya and similar contexts.

**Somalia**

As part of the Horn of Africa regional review, the Somalia study focused on the use of CERF funds in 2011. These amounted to \$52.9 million from the RR and UFE windows in response to drought-related humanitarian needs.

*Main Findings:*

- In terms of timeliness, the UFE allocation at the beginning of 2011 was found to have gone some way to offsetting a critical funding shortfall in combination with the Somalia Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF).
- Funds from the RR window came marginally, but critically, ahead of a general upswing in funds, due largely to responsive and quick processing by the CERF Secretariat. The request to the RR window, however, should have been made earlier.

- Allocations from the UFE were made in conjunction with the CHF and as such, through a gap analysis. Allocations from both windows were perceived to have filled gaps, including the need for significant expansions, within the programmatic responses of UN agencies. The large allocations to WFP and UNICEF were used to fill large pipeline gaps. Other CERF recipients, notably WHO and FAO felt that they were able to use CERF funding from both windows to fill critical gaps.
- A clear majority of actors felt that the CERF strengthened the hand of the HC but there was no sense that the broader humanitarian reform was strengthened directly by the CERF. However, coordination in Somalia was strong overall and participation in the clusters and the CAP, a prerequisite for access to the CHF, was high. That the CAP and the clusters provided the over-arching framework, within which the CERF operated, was taken as evidence that the CERF supported reform indirectly.
- Given the extreme challenges of access in Somalia, many agencies could not undertake first hand monitoring or evaluation of partners. Agencies had responded to this challenge in a number of ways, including the extensive use of third party monitoring.
- There was no current link between monitoring and evaluation of CHF and CERF projects. Monitoring and evaluation had long been acknowledged as a critical weakness in country-level pooled funds. The Somalia CHF Review made a number of recommendations to OCHA Somalia's Funds Coordination Unit, including looking for ways to make concrete links to CERF projects and to extend monitoring arrangements and evaluation plans where at all feasible.
- The author noted a lack of joint processes surrounding the preparation of the annual RC/HC report on the use of CERF funds.

*Main Recommendations:*

- Complementarity between future CERF allocations (in particular UFE allocations) and the CHF should be formalised and continue to the fullest extent possible. This should include ensuring that any future UFE allocations take place at the same time as standard allocation rounds for the CHF.
- Special attention should be played by the OCHA Somalia Funds Coordination Unit in extending enhanced monitoring and evaluation processes for the CHF to CERF projects.
- By way of increasing transparency of CERF allocations, the role of the clusters in CERF allocations should be examined. Again, this should be undertaken alongside the examination of the clusters' role in CHF allocations, recommended by the review.

By way of increasing transparency of CERF allocations, the CHF Advisory Board (which contains donors and NGO representatives) should formally review CERF allocations. The Board should consider the strategic justifications for the CERF allocations (geography, sector and responding agency) rather than the programmatic detail.