

1. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Advisory Group met on 13 and 14 June 2024 in Geneva under the Chairpersonship of Ms. Susanne Fries-Gaier (Germany). Following on its substantive deliberations on a range of items, including the management and use of the CERF, CERF's climate action, resource mobilization and advocacy, innovative financing mechanisms, and CERF's strategic impact at the country level, the Advisory Group shared and discussed its recommendations with the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG) and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mr. Martin Griffiths. In her opening remarks, Ms. Fries-Gaier set the stage for the meeting, briefing on achievements since the meeting in December 2023 and underscoring the value of CERF as a central humanitarian funding instrument, as well as the key role of the Advisory Group in helping orient its strategic direction in an ever more demanding humanitarian landscape.

2. In the first session, Ms. Alice Armani, Chief of OCHA's Pooled Fund Management Branch, provided highlights on the use and management of CERF, including the Fund's 2023 results, activities undertaken in the first half of 2024, and priorities going forward. Referencing the CERF Annual Results Report, Ms. Armani informed that CERF had allocated \$668 million in 2023 to enable assistance for 33 million people. CERF's speed and flexibility during the year allowed UN agencies to initiate CERF-funded activities, on average, only 1.5 working days after the submission of a Rapid Response application. CERF's achievements were made possible by the generous contributions from a diverse group of supporters, including 63 Member States, three regional authorities, and several private sector entities. Collectively CERF's donors contributed \$559 million to the Fund in 2023. It was noted that by early May 2024, CERF had allocated \$220.7 million to humanitarian emergencies, including to enable anticipatory responses to El Niño across 11 countries, to prevent famine in Sudan and to respond to food insecurity in Mali. Ms. Armani updated on CERF's ongoing and forward-looking priorities, noting the (i) further scaling-up and mainstreaming of Anticipatory Action, (ii) the continued operationalization of the CERF Climate Action Account, (iii) the exploration of innovative financing modalities for CERF, (iv) the rolling out After-Action Reviews, including to better target and articulate CERF's strategic value and impact, and (v) development of a learning framework to foster continuous improvement and catalyse innovation and positive change. Ms. Armani noted that, in 2024, CERF has commissioned two external reviews on the Fund's efforts to support a localized response and to promote Accountability to Affected People, which the Advisory Group would be briefed on at its next meeting. Finally, Ms. Armani noted that CERF expects to pursue enhancing the flexibility of the loan facility in 2025.

3. The Advisory Group voiced appreciation for the management of the Fund, noting that CERF is critical for the humanitarian system to respond rapidly to the growing humanitarian needs. The Group commended CERF for the high quality of its annual reports and data disaggregation and noted their importance in demonstrating CERF's impact. The Group also thanked OCHA for the quality of the background documents for the meeting. The Advisory Group reiterated its support for CERF's anticipatory action agenda and for further scaling up and mainstreaming these efforts. It commended CERF for setting the agenda for the humanitarian system and pledged its continued support for CERF's strategic role in promoting priorities such as localization, Accountability to Affected People, and responses to gender-based violence. Members highlighted the uniqueness of CERF in the humanitarian system and encouraged making full use of this in advocacy materials. The Group underscored the importance of CERF's learning efforts and suggested an update on the roll-out of After-Action Reviews at its next meeting, as well as an update on findings from the CERF-commissioned external reviews.

4. In a session on CERF's climate action, the Chief of CERF, Mr. Michael Jensen, and the Chief a.i. Humanitarian Financing Strategy and Analysis Section, Mr. Daniel Pfister, updated on key developments in the operationalization of the CERF Climate Action Account. Mr. Pfister reminded that the Account will help scale-up anticipatory action and boost fast responses to climate-related disasters, and support humanitarian activities contributing to adaptation and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses. He updated on the process of funding attribution, explained planned reporting efforts. He further set out next steps for further operationalizing the Account, including securing added funding and engaging at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29). The Group rearticulated its support for the Account and agreed that CERF has a complementary role to play in concert with other climate

actors. The Group appreciated the clear articulation of CERF's added value and comparative advantage in the overall climate-financing landscape, as laid out in a mapping of the wider climate-financing architecture presented. The Group noted that this role should be clearly communicated in dedicated advocacy material and agreed that support for immediate lifesaving assistance, contributing to building vulnerable peoples' resilience to future climate shocks, is in line with CERF's mandate and offers a strong value proposition. The Group commended CERF on its first Annual Climate Action Report. In line with discussions at the December meeting, many Advisory Group members had explored their respective governments' internal funding structures to identify opportunities for new and additional funding for the Account. There was agreement that the launch of the Account had helped spur domestic engagements between humanitarian and climate departments and that efforts to secure funding were ongoing, but challenges remained. The Group offered to advocate for the Account with peers and flagged the importance of building momentum up to COP29 and through regional climate-related events. It also encouraged communication of compelling examples of CERF's climate action and highlighted the importance of OECD DAC Rio Markers for climate.

5. In a discussion on resource mobilization and advocacy, Ms. Anja Nitzsche, Chief of OCHA's Partnership and Resource Mobilization Branch, informed that CERF in 2023 saw the lowest income since 2018, with \$559 million contributed against the USD 1 billion goal of the UN Secretary-General. She also provided a funding outlook for 2024, noting that CERF's income for the year is estimated at \$546 million, which is lower than what was projected at the same time last year. Ms. Nitzsche presented opportunities for outreach to broaden and diversify the donor base, particularly within the Latin American and Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions, as well as with private sector. She underscored the critical role of the Advisory Group in supporting peer-to-peer efforts. The Advisory Group highlighted the uniqueness of CERF's broad donor base (including recipient countries 'giving back') and reiterated its availability to support further advocacy, including peer-to-peer efforts. The Group committed to capturing opportunities and commitments for advocacy and resource mobilization in a dedicated workplan that will guide its activities in periods between the official meetings of the Group. Members further agreed to proactively use their participation in recipient UN agencies' executive boards to encourage stronger agency support and advocacy for CERF, to facilitate regional CERF events targeting potential donors, and to increase advocacy support for CERF in the build-up to major events. The Group flagged CERF's upcoming 20th anniversary as an excellent opportunity to launch a dedicated communications campaign and related fundraising efforts and suggested a discussion about this at its next meeting. The Group welcomed tailored messages on CERF's added value to support peer-to-peer efforts, suggested further differentiation of messages attuned to target regions and groups, and reiterated the importance of pursuing commitment by the Secretary-General and USG/ERC to personally engage and reinforce fundraising efforts.

6. Focusing on private sector funding more specifically, the Advisory Group engaged with representatives from Google, Mastercard, ByteDance and the Private Sector Humanitarian Alliance, who highlighted their corporate giving concepts as well as in-kind support and reflected on opportunities and challenges in supporting CERF. ByteDance briefed on reasons for the company's \$1 million contribution to CERF in 2022. The representatives emphasized the importance of individually tailored outreach efforts, sustained relationship management, visibility and linking of funding to specific emergencies as important aspects for many major corporates. The Advisory Group welcomed the exchange and discussed decision-making processes on corporate giving and partnerships. While the Group noted CERF's challenges in attracting significant private sector contributions and encouraged realistic expectations, it also suggested that OCHA further explore these opportunities and articulate a strategy for retaining private sector entities as donors to CERF. The Group welcomed an update on private sector engagement efforts at its next meeting.

7. Members from the United Kingdom and Ecuador facilitated a session on innovative financing options for CERF. The discussion centred on an insurance-based risk transfer solution linked to CERF's anticipatory action portfolio, as well as an endowment fund model where capital gains would benefit CERF. The Group agreed on the importance of exploring these further given the dire outlook for growth in regular income, but also flagged potential challenges in taking them forward, including the availability of 'start-up' funding, and OCHA's implementation capacity. The Group discussed how the insurance option potentially could allow CERF to expand its anticipatory action portfolio considerably, without a comparable increase in the Fund's annual income. It noted that the endowment model would need to be demand-driven and require up-front private sector involvement and agreed that the value

proposition would have to be very clearly articulated from the outset. Members appreciated the exploratory work done by OCHA on an insurance option and welcomed a continued discussion on innovative financing opportunities at its next meeting.

8. The Group also discussed CERF's strategic value at the country-level with two UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators. Dr. Issa Sanogo, UN Resident Coordinator in Madagascar and Dr. Mohamed Ag Ayoya, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Central African Republic, both clearly articulated the added value of CERF from a country perspective, particularly CERF's timeliness, its catalytic nature and convening influence and how funding enabled effective and coordinated lifesaving, localized and multisectoral responses, while increasing accountability and transparency. The Group discussed the comparative advantages of CERF as well as ongoing challenges.

9. In the final session, the Advisory Group was able to engage with the USG/ERC regarding its deliberations and recommendations going forward. The USG/ERC provided an update on the broader humanitarian landscape and the humanitarian system's response capacity, emphasizing that the system is facing unprecedented challenges and that CERF has enabled humanitarian operations to continue in particularly complex settings, including Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He further noted the importance of CERF's commitment to leading the way on promoting innovation and positive system change, including in support of reform efforts like the Flagship Initiative. The USG/ERC also underscored the Climate Action Account's value. The Advisory Group thanked him for his leadership during his tenure, including his unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles and to humanitarian workers worldwide, and commended him for his management of the Fund. The Group encouraged CERF to continue setting the humanitarian agenda, promoting positive system change, and encouraged the USG/ERC to emphasize the primacy of this instrument to his successor and the Secretary-General, as well as the importance of supporting resource mobilization and advocacy regarding CERF's value as a global public good. The Group reiterated its availability to assist in fundraising and advocacy efforts for CERF guided by a common workplan, including by leveraging opportunities presented by CERF's 20-year anniversary. The Group also noted its availability to further explore alternative funding avenues for the CERF.

10. In the closing session, Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of OCHA's Financing and Partnerships Division, thanked outgoing members for their invaluable support and contributions to the efforts of the Advisory Group over the past years, including Ms. Maria Jose del Aguila Castillo (Guatemala) and Mr. Shaheen Ali Al-Kaabi (Qatar). The Director also thanked the outgoing Chair, Ms. Susanne Fries-Gaier, for her excellent Chairmanship and strong leadership. Lastly, she expressed OCHA's commitment to support the Advisory Group in moving their workplan forward. The next meeting of the Advisory Group is to be held in New York in November or December 2024.