

A smiling woman with dark skin is carrying a woven basket on her head. She is wearing a white t-shirt that has a small logo on the chest, which includes the United Nations emblem and the text 'United Nations CERF'. The background is a warm, orange-toned wall. A dotted line with a blue dot at the end curves across the upper left portion of the image.

This is CERF



Central Emergency
Response Fund



Photo: UNICEF/Ammar


Established by the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) in 2005 as the United Nations global emergency response fund, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) enables humanitarian actors to deliver life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people, when and where needed the most. CERF funding allows UN agencies and partners to collectively jump-start relief efforts in emerging or escalating crises before other funding sources are available. CERF also serves as a strategic instrument for addressing critical funding gaps in underfunded emergencies.

“

Every CERF allocation includes targeted assistance to children, who suffer more in the dramatic impacts of humanitarian crises. Despite its record of success, CERF continues to seek ways to improve and become even more effective. It is a centre of innovation in the humanitarian system.

António Guterres,
United Nations Secretary-General

”

A woman wearing a red headscarf and a red shawl is filling a yellow plastic container at a public tap stand. She is looking down at the container. In the background, other people, including a child, are visible. The scene is outdoors, and the tap stand is made of concrete.

Strong and predictable donor support has enabled CERF to continuously innovate and adapt to changes in humanitarian needs.

Since CERF's inception, contributions from 133 UN Member States and observers, as well as regional governments, corporate donors, foundations and individuals, enabled humanitarian partners to deliver more than \$8 billion in life-saving assistance in over 100 countries and territories. Acknowledging the importance of CERF's assistance, 58 recipient countries have contributed to CERF, making it a 'fund for all, by all.' For a complete list of CERF donors, go to: [contributions | CERF \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/cerf/contributors/).

Beyond the provision of critical funding for life-saving assistance for millions of people globally, CERF continuously serves as a catalyst for positive change throughout the humanitarian system. CERF supports anticipatory action which enables partners to get ahead of predictable hazards and mitigate humanitarian crises. CERF also dedicates funding to underfunded priority areas such as gender-based violence and the needs of people with disabilities.

In recognition of CERF's achievements and proven capacity to provide fast and timely funding for life-saving assistance in humanitarian crises across the globe, in 2016 UNGA endorsed an annual funding target of \$1 billion for CERF. A fully resourced CERF is critical for supporting the global humanitarian system in meeting growing needs, as an expression of shared global solidarity.

How CERF works

In a humanitarian crisis, humanitarian organizations on the ground jointly assess and prioritize humanitarian needs. UN funds and programmes and specialized agencies are eligible for CERF funding and implement grants in partnership with local, national, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), host governments and Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) can apply for CERF funding when new needs in the country exceed the UN organizations' capacity to respond. Determining the level and severity of needs and identifying people who most urgently need assistance requires joint planning, coordination, and prioritization by UN Country Teams/Humanitarian Country Teams (UNCT/HCT) and other humanitarian organizations under the leadership of RC/HCs.

CERF is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, and resources are allocated in line with [CERF's Life-Saving Criteria](#).

These criteria serve as guidance for the RC/HC and UNCT/HCT on how to develop applications for CERF funding.

By building on the UN and humanitarian coordination architecture, CERF provides funding based on needs, risks and collective priorities. Humanitarian partners work together to identify and prioritize activities to be included in a CERF request, based on evidence, assessments of need and, in sudden-onset disasters, projections and forecasts. RC/HCs submit a prioritized proposal to the CERF secretariat, which then reviews the application and supports the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) in deciding on the allocation of funding to partners on the ground.

Photo: UNICEF/Alhamdani



FUNDING WINDOWS

CERF channels funds to UN entities through its [Rapid Response \(RR\)](#) and [Underfunded Emergencies \(UFE\)](#) windows. While the process of developing a formal application is similar for both funding windows, the starting point for allocations differs.

For the RR window, the RC/HC – in consultation with humanitarian partners– can request funds at any time to respond to new and unforeseen humanitarian emergencies when timely response is critical. CERF also continues to be more forward-leaning by making allocations earlier in an emergency on a ‘no-regrets’ basis – even when information is still incomplete and uncertain – and by making allocations partially based on projections and forecasts (e.g., of drought, food insecurity and displacement). Thus, CERF-funded assistance reaches people sooner and, in some cases, before the peak of a humanitarian shock. To ensure evidence-based allocation decisions, CERF uses a real-time dashboard and a statistical model to facilitate the comparison of new crises with past allocations. CERF continuously improves its methodology.

UFE allocations start with a comparative global analysis of risk, vulnerability, and funding levels for ongoing humanitarian emergencies through a consultative process at headquarters- level involving UN agencies, the Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and NGOs. CERF has developed a rigorous [methodology](#) to establish a strong evidence base for the selection of the most underfunded and neglected humanitarian crises to receive funding. This includes three components:

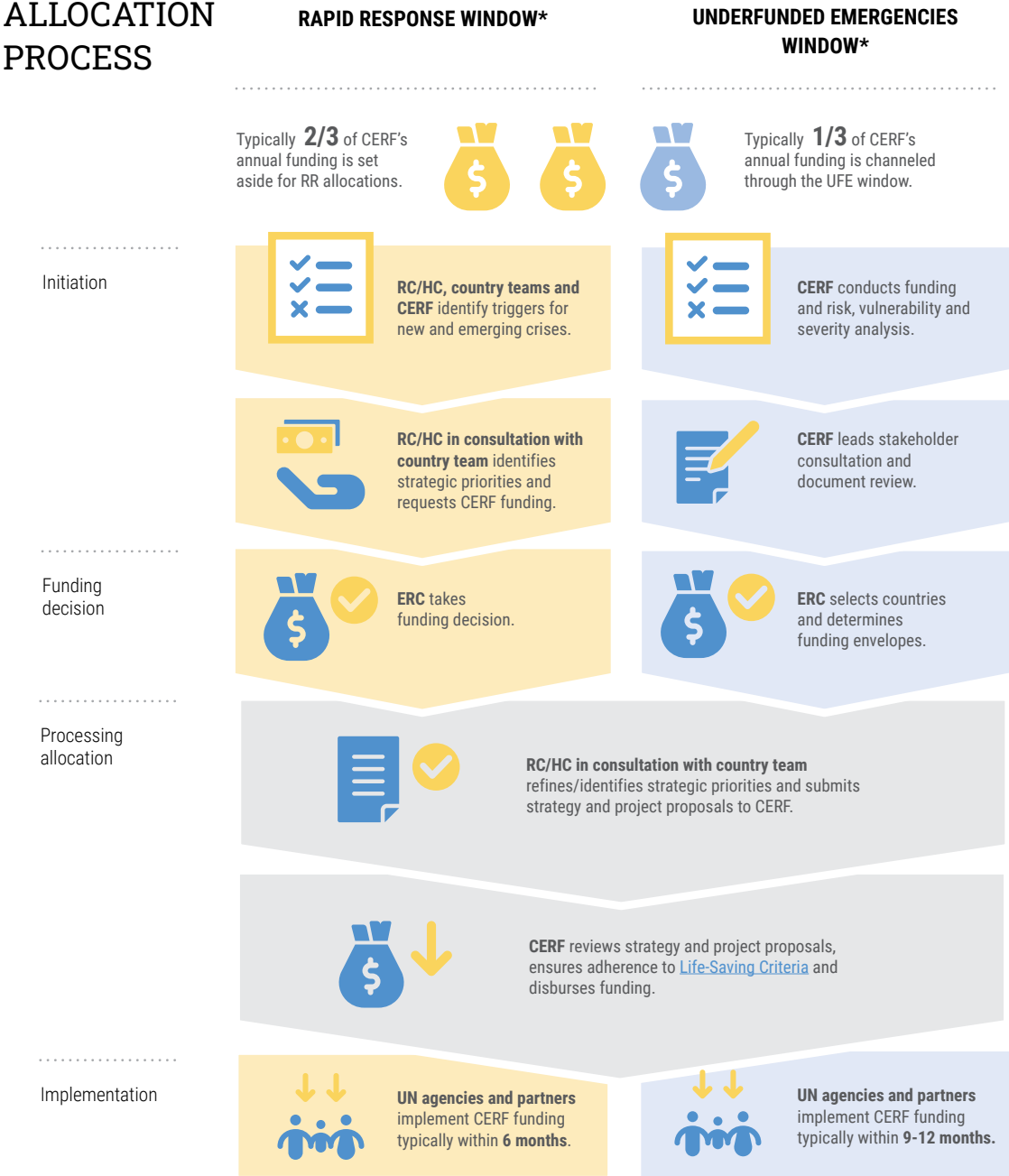
- 1. A quantitative analysis of funding levels and the severity of humanitarian needs and risks aggregated into the CERF Index for Risk and Vulnerability.
- 2. Consultations with UN agencies, NGOs and other partners.
- 3. A desk review of Humanitarian Needs Overviews, Humanitarian Response Plans and other documents.

Loan facility

In addition to the two funding windows, CERF has a \$30 million loan facility to cover cash-flow gaps in UN humanitarian operations. This facility can be used when UN agencies experience cash-flow problems in responding to humanitarian emergencies due to delays in receiving contributions from donors. The ERC determines the amount to be advanced in each situation.

CERF allocations are designed to complement other humanitarian funding sources, such as Country-Based Pooled Funds and bilateral funding.

CERF ALLOCATION PROCESS



CERF management

The Emergency Relief Coordinator manages CERF on behalf of the UN Secretary-General and is supported by OCHA. OCHA ensures that funds are allocated properly, disbursed in a timely manner and that the use of funds is reported appropriately and transparently.¹

The [CERF Advisory Group](#), an independent body comprised of diverse individuals drawn donor and recipient Member States and other stakeholders, provides policy guidance to the UN Secretary-General on the use and impact of the fund. Membership selection procedures are designed to ensure the necessary expertise in the group, while also considering appropriate geographic and gender diversity among the members. The Advisory Group holds two official meetings a year.

¹ As a revolving fund, CERF may disburse more or less than its income within a calendar year.



Photo: OCHA/Paolo Palmero

CERF strategic added value

CERF is designed to ensure that every dollar it allocates leverages additional benefits in support of the humanitarian response on the ground.

For each CERF allocation, RC/HCs articulate, through a 'strategic statement,' the added value and co-benefits that will be achieved using CERF funding – in addition to the operational, life-saving objectives that are central to all CERF allocations.

Setting out a clear, succinct strategic vision at the outset of an allocation process helps ensure that partners work towards a common strategic objective. This provides CERF and the ERC with assurance that CERF funds are utilized to their fullest potential.

When reporting on the use of CERF funding at the end of the grant period, RC/HCs are asked to reflect on the achievement of the strategic objectives as set out in the initial strategic statement, and to assess how the allocation contributed to achieving its four overarching core objectives that underpin CERF's design and mandate: speed, timeliness, coherence and catalytic effect.

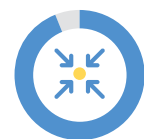
In the reports on the use of CERF grants during the past five years, RC/HCs have stated that:²



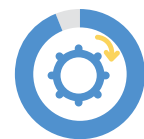
98%
of Rapid Response CERF allocations led to **fast delivery of assistance**



98%
of CERF allocations responded to **time-critical needs**



94%
of CERF allocations **improved coordination**



94%
of CERF allocations **improved resource mobilization from other sources**

² All CERF grant reports are available [here](#).

CERF complementarity with Country-Based Pooled Fund.

While the Funds are unique, they each provide rapid flexible funding fostering coherent and coordinated responses under the leadership of the RC/HC. **When CERF and CBPF resources are provided to the same contexts, RC/HCs ensure that the resources are used in a complementary and coherent manner.**

Photo: OCHA/Oleksandr Ratushniak

A fund for all, by all

With humanitarian needs skyrocketing in 2022, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) remained an indispensable element of the global humanitarian architecture.

Thanks to the generous support of its donors, CERF allocated \$735 million for humanitarian assistance in 42 countries – the second highest amount in the Fund's history. This enabled UN agencies and partners to provide life-saving assistance and protection for 32.7 million people across the globe. Despite donors' fiscal pressures related to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic slowdown and the war in Ukraine, CERF received \$612 million in paid contributions.



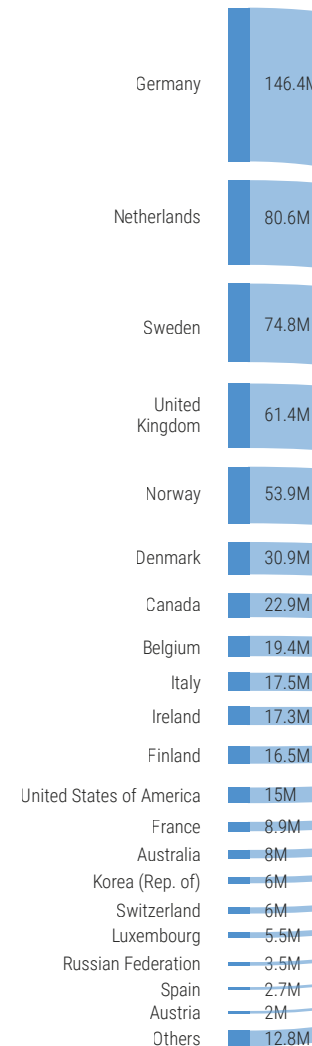
Comprehensive, detailed and real-time information of CERF allocations is available in the Fund's online information tools, including the [CERF online allocation tracker](#), the [CERF Data Hub](#) and the [Pooled Funds Data Hub](#).

2022



\$612M

in contributions from
58 Member States
3 regional and local authorities
Multiple private contributions

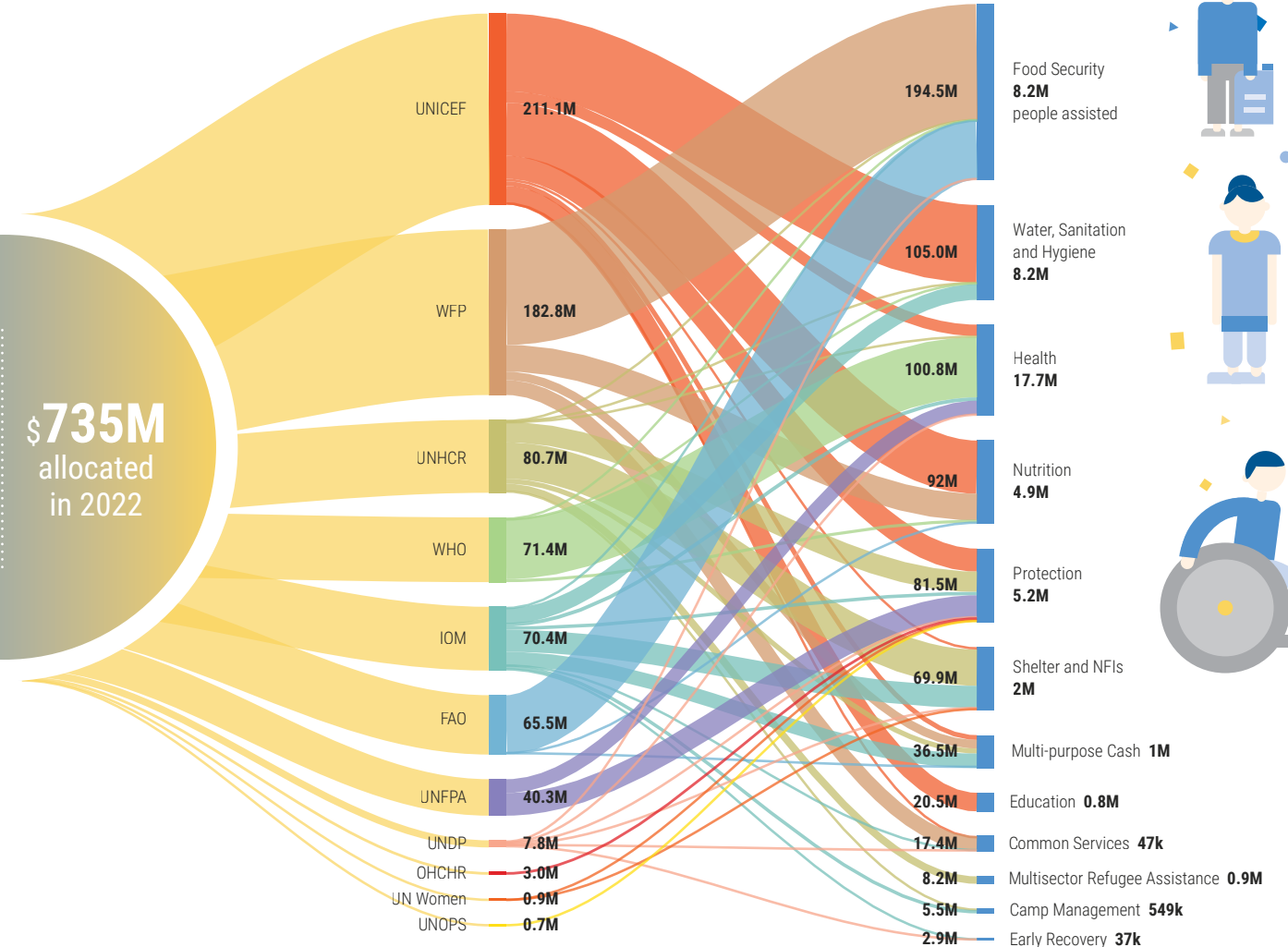


\$735M

allocated

\$612M contributed for 2022

\$735M allocated in 2022



11

UN agencies in partnership with
International NGOs
National NGOs
Government entities
Red Cross/Red Crescent societies

32.7M

people assisted
in 42 countries



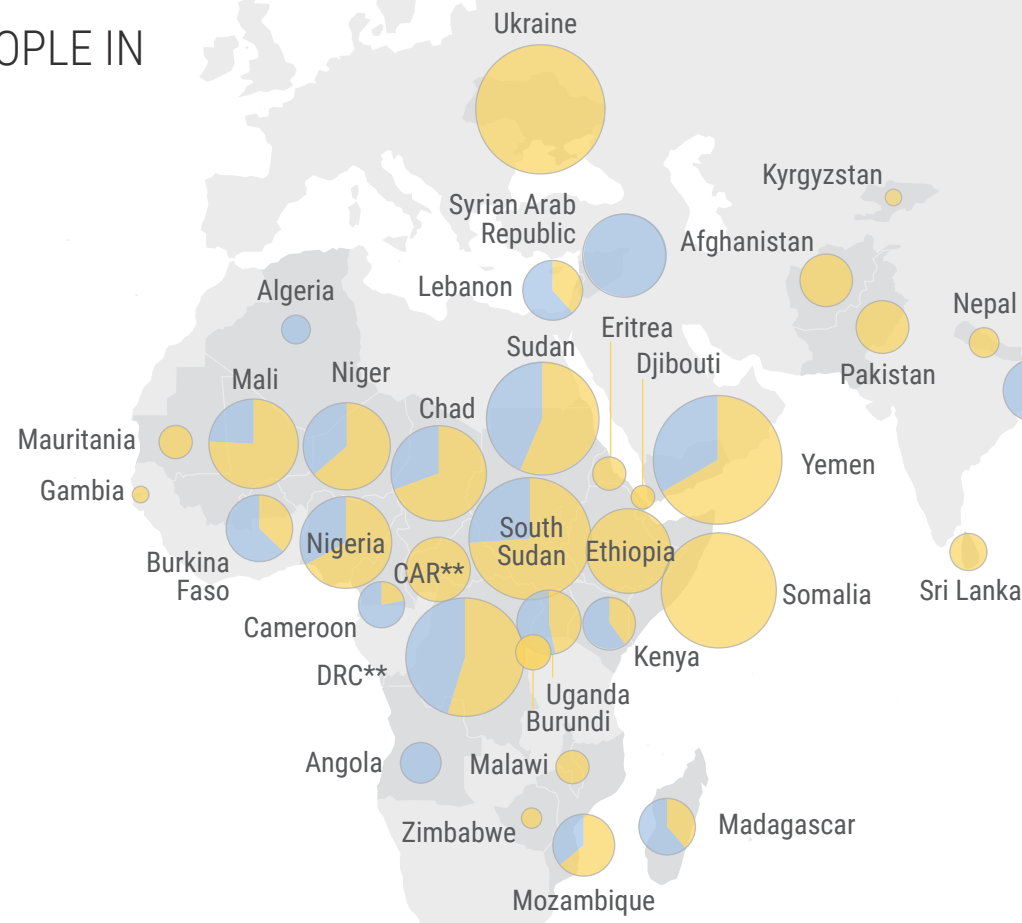
IN 2022, CERF ALLOCATED

 **\$735M**

TO ENABLE LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE FOR

 **32.7M** PEOPLE IN

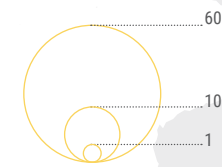
 **42** COUNTRIES



Allocations by country and window
in US\$ million

Ukraine	60.5	Kenya	10
Yemen	60	Afghanistan	10
South Sudan	54	Venezuela	8
DRC**	50	Cuba	7.8
Somalia	48	Cameroon	7.7
Sudan	45.9	Angola	6
Chad	33	Colombia	5
Nigeria	30.5	Sri Lanka	5
Mali	29	Honduras	5
Niger	27.5	Eritrea	4
Ethiopia	26	Mauritania	4
Syria Arab Republic	25	Malawi	4
Myanmar	22	Nepal	3.2
Haiti	20	Burundi	3.1
Burkina Faso	16.1	Algeria	3
CAR**	15	Djibouti	2
Uganda	15	Zimbabwe	1.5
Bangladesh	14	Kyrgyzstan	1
Mozambique	13.9	Gambia	1
Lebanon	13	Tonga	1
Madagascar	11.5		
Pakistan	10.1		

CERF allocations by country and window
in US\$ million



** CAR - Central African Republic
DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo

Why fund CERF?

CERF is

PROMOTING COORDINATION AND COHERENCE

CERF funding is allocated to multiple organizations based on each organization's comparative advantage and in line with humanitarian partners' commonly agreed priorities. This promotes coordination among humanitarian actors, eliminates duplication and overlaps, prevents fragmented responses and supports the achievement of collective outcomes.

GLOBAL

CERF provides humanitarian support across the globe, expanding the reach of its donors to all crises, whether new, worsening or forgotten.

CATALYTIC

CERF enables humanitarian partners to quickly scale up response and leverage additional donor support through demonstrated and timely humanitarian action. CERF also allows Resident Coordinators /Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) to implement their vision for a better humanitarian response, supporting cross-cutting and other humanitarian priorities in a way that can catalyze positive change in the quality and accountability of humanitarian responses.

FAST

CERF allocates funding within hours of a crisis, making resources available when they are needed the most. Time lost means lives lost.

COST EFFECTIVE

CERF offers value for money by allowing donors to efficiently assist people in need wherever crises strike. When donors contribute to CERF, they ensure that limited resources go as far as they can to save lives and reduce the suffering of millions of women, men, girls and boys caught up in crises.

ANTICIPATORY WHERE POSSIBLE

Where possible, CERF enables the delivery of life-saving assistance to vulnerable people ahead of predictable emergencies, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system.

NEUTRAL, IMPARTIAL AND INDEPENDENT

CERF is fully unearmarked, principled and independent to ensure funding goes to meet the most urgent, life-saving needs wherever crises hit.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

CERF interventions support the involvement of implementing partners, particularly local organizations. Each year, approximately a quarter of CERF funds is implemented through a large network of local and international responders who have partnered with UN agencies.

PREDICTABLE

CERF is a trusted and dependable source of predictable funding for the most urgent and critical humanitarian action.

SUPPORTIVE OF THE GRAND BARGAIN

CERF plays a key role in delivering the Grand Bargain: CERF funding is flexible, efficient, unearmarked, principled, transparent, supports cash programming, empowers humanitarian leadership, and promotes a coordinated, inclusive and strategic humanitarian response.

STRICTLY PRIORITIZED

CERF allocations are strictly life-saving and based on the needs identified and prioritized by humanitarian partners on the front lines of emergency responses. This ensures early responses to the most time-critical humanitarian priorities.

How to contribute to CERF?

CERF's achievements are only made possible thanks to the generous support of its donors. Every contribution to CERF, no matter how small, when pooled, helps CERF save lives at a global scale. By contributing to CERF, Member States, observers and other authorities, as well as individuals, corporations and foundations, join hands with the international community's collective humanitarian action to reduce the suffering of millions of people caught up in crises across the world.

Interested donors are also encouraged to support OCHA, the UN office that manages CERF and enables its operations worldwide.

DONATE

01 Member States, observers and other authorities that wish to contribute to CERF can contact the OCHA Donor Relations Section (ocha.donor.relations@un.org).

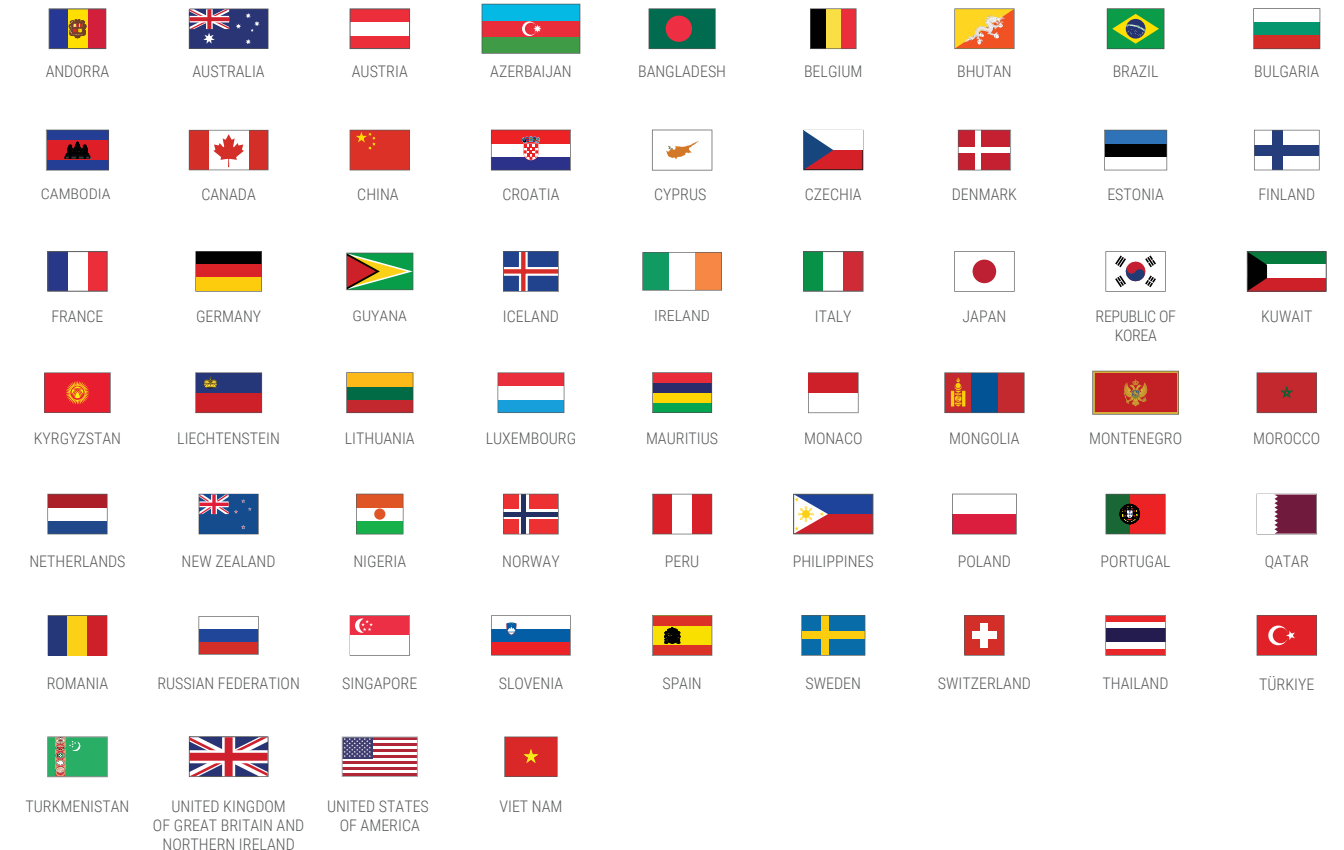
02 Individuals, corporations and foundations can visit <http://bit.ly/GIVETOCERF> to contribute directly to CERF.

03 For general information about CERF, please contact cerf@un.org or visit cerf.un.org.

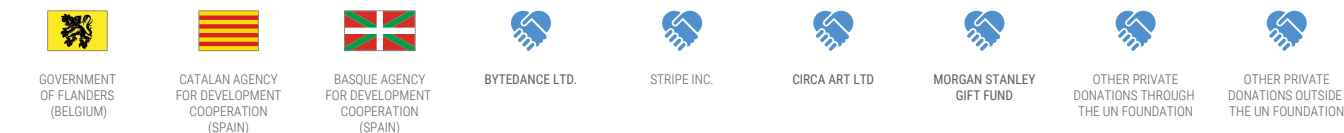
The CERF High-level Pledging Event (HLPE) is organized annually by OCHA in December in New York. The HLPE serves to showcase CERF's achievements and unique role, and provides an opportunity for donors to express global solidarity and announce pledges to CERF for the following year.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

CERF 2022 donors



OTHER DONORS



[Read more on CERF donors](#)



United Nations
CERF

Central
Emergency
Response
Fund

CERF was born out of necessity and it continues through generosity.
Donors enable CERF to support emergency life-saving humanitarian
activities throughout the world. As crises persist, so does our resolve.
With your help, we respond.



cerf.un.org | pooledfunds.impact.unocha.org



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Photo: UNICEF/Ammar