

# CERF HIGH-LEVEL PLEDGING EVENT – A FUND FOR ALL BY ALL



Concept Note for the Annual High-Level Pledging Event on the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

7th December 2018

---

## Background

Established in 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has facilitated over US\$5.5 billion worth of life-saving assistance to 101 countries and territories. CERF delivers funding quickly to humanitarian responders and brings greater balance to emergency assistance through its rapid response and underfunded emergencies windows.

CERF was created as a fund “for all, by all” and has for 12 years been the world’s global emergency fund that with unprecedented speed, predictability and flexibility every year ensures life-saving aid and protection for millions of people wherever, whenever a crisis hits, sometimes within hours of the onset of an emergency. Each year on average CERF enables partners to deliver critical healthcare to more than 15 million people, food aid to 4 million, urgent water and sanitation to 4 million, protection to 3 million, agricultural livelihoods protection to more than 3 million and shelter to 2 million among others. A majority of people assisted are women and girls.

Since CERF was established, the global humanitarian requirements coordinated by the UN have quadrupled – from US\$5.2 billion to assist 32 million people to \$22.5 billion to support over 90 million people in need in 2018. Recognizing the increased needs and CERF’s earned position in the humanitarian ecosystem as one of the most effective financing tools to provide time-critical UN-led life-saving humanitarian assistance, the General Assembly in 2016 endorsed the Secretary-General’s call to more than double CERF’s annual funding target to \$1 billion. This endorsement reflects Member States’ confidence in CERF that has received contributions from 126 Member States, including from 48 that have also benefited from CERF funding – a testament to the world’s collective commitment to CERF as a “fund for all by all”.

*“A strong United Nations needs a strong and reliable CERF to reach people trapped in crises and to respond to the needs of those furthest behind.” - United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres*

## Issues and Significance

2017 and 2018 were challenging years for the humanitarian community with an alarming level of needs around the globe. CERF’s donors recognized the need for a strong response from CERF and in 2017 alone contributed an all-time high of \$515 million to the fund.

Throughout 2018, CERF’s global reach was central to the humanitarian community’s ability to respond as the fund provided time-critical life-saving assistance to millions of people in 45 countries at a total value of approximately \$500 million – the highest ever allocated from CERF in a single year. Funding from CERF spanned from life-saving assistance to populations affected by conflict and internal strife to natural disasters as drought, earthquakes and hurricanes and disease outbreaks as Ebola.

In early 2018, as the humanitarian needs in Yemen grew, CERF released its single biggest allocation ever of \$50 million, for humanitarian programmes in the country providing life-saving assistance to stave off the growing risk of famine, mitigate the impact of an accelerated collapse of public services and assist the civilians affected by the escalated conflict. Later in the year, through a cross-border regional approach, CERF allocated \$30 million to avert acute hunger and malnutrition in the Sahel. The allocation helped millions of affected people in the worst-hit communities, particularly in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in Burkina Faso, Chad,

Mali and Mauritania. During the year, CERF also supported responses to the Venezuelan refugee and migration crisis, beginning with a regional allocation of \$6.2 million targeting some 195,000 beneficiaries across Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago, which later was followed by multiple individual allocations from CERF to the affected countries. In October, CERF provided \$15 million for Indonesia's efforts to support earthquake and tsunami victims in Sulawesi.

Beyond rapid response allocations to new or deteriorating crises, CERF also continued to be a lifeline for people caught up in crises that don't make the headlines but where needs are just as urgent. CERF provided a record high \$180 million to 19 underfunded and neglected crises where levels of vulnerability are alarmingly high but funding remains critically low. These allocations are estimated to provide life-saving assistance to a total of 7.1 million people.

CERF's flexible funding brings greater balance to emergency assistance globally. This is particularly the case in small or medium scale emergencies. Therefore, in addition to the larger emergencies, during 2018 CERF also ensured life-saving assistance to a number of small and medium size crises, including the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo where CERF allocated \$2 million to fight and contain the outbreak at an early stage. CERF also ensured life-saving aid in Djibouti in the aftermath of cyclone Sagar, allocating \$1.2 million to enable three UN agencies' immediate response.

For these emergency responses – and many others - a CERF with a larger funding capacity would have greater catalytic and strategic impact and enable an even more timely and comprehensive humanitarian response to reach more people effectively with life-saving assistance. A larger CERF could also take new allocation approaches to scale, including expanding funding for life-saving anticipatory action. Recognizing the growing evidence that early action interventions undertaken before the full impact of a disaster can help save lives, mitigate suffering and lower the cost multi-fold of responding to the humanitarian consequences of shocks, and acknowledging CERF's role as a convener of coordinated early action, a larger CERF could help bring anticipatory funding in advance of imminent crises to scale in support of a more anticipatory risk informed humanitarian system.

## Objectives

CERF is the collective success of the global humanitarian community, but at the same time, the fund's ability to respond to the increasing humanitarian needs and deliver life-saving support globally is the shared responsibility of its donors. When the General Assembly in 2016 endorsed the increase of CERF's annual fundraising target to \$1 billion, it also called upon all Member States to consider increasing their voluntary contributions to the fund. A strong CERF relies on Member States' commitment to deliver on its mandate, to leave no one behind, and to reach the most vulnerable first.

In the year where CERF's annual funding target is officially increased to \$1 billion, the 2018 CERF High Level Event will be a milestone in the strengthening of CERF's capacity to better align the fund with the global humanitarian needs. With a point of departure in CERF's achieved results during 2018, the event will seek to galvanize increased global commitment to CERF to ensure that the fund is fit to respond to the increased global humanitarian needs in accordance with its General Assembly mandate. It will offer an opportunity to the humanitarian community to respond to Secretary-General, António Guterres' call during the 2018 General Assembly for increased funding to CERF and thereby allow the humanitarian society to demonstrate commitment to the collective responsibility that CERF is truly "a fund for all by all".

In particular, the event will:

- Showcase CERF's global reach and its results in delivering humanitarian aid worldwide, including its role in promoting fast, timely and effective response at scale to people in need, wherever and whenever crises hit. The event will also demonstrate the added value of CERF in promoting leadership and coordination of humanitarian responses. From a global point of departure, the session will zoom in on

CERF's role in averting acute hunger and malnutrition in the Sahel through early action displaying results achieved in selected countries in the Sahel.

- Offer donors an opportunity to announce pledges to CERF for 2019 and collectively ensure that CERF's level of funding continues to increase and its donor base further diversifies.
- Offer Member States an opportunity to announce leadership initiatives to support mobilization of resources towards the new funding target.

## Format

The event will be organized in two segments:

1. **Opening Segment:** The Secretary-General will open the event and initiate an opening segment that through interventions by panelists comprising high level representatives from a CERF donor and recipient Member States, Humanitarian Coordinators and UN Agency Heads will demonstrate the success of CERF in meeting the urgent needs for survival and protection of people in crises and its added value in their respective contexts. These interventions will be followed by questions and answers from the floor representing Member States, UN agencies, civil society and private sector partners. The Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Mark Lowcock will chair this session.
2. **Pledging Segment:** A separate pledging segment will offer Member States and other stakeholders an opportunity to announce pledges for 2019 and express support to CERF. The ERC will chair this session.

These sessions will take place back to back.

## Participants

All UN Member States and Observer Missions, UN agencies, civil society and private sector representatives are invited to the event.

## Venue and Logistics

The event will be held on 7 December 2018, from 10 am to 1 pm. It will take place in the ECOSOC Chamber in the United Nations Secretariat in New York. Translation will be provided in all six UN languages.

## Registration and Pledge

Participants are requested to complete the on-line registration form and indicate their intention to make a short statement and/or pledge by **3 December 2018**, by visiting <https://cerf.typeform.com/to/NLUmnl>