

## UN SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR INCREASED FUNDING FOR CERF TO PROMOTE EARLY HUMANITARIAN ACTION

(New York, 26 September 2018): Today, during the UN General Assembly High-Level side event on the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, delivered an improvised and heartfelt speech calling for increased support for CERF as a critical way to improve early humanitarian action – even before disasters strike. Member States responded by reaffirming their commitment to CERF, including with new financial pledges.

“What I would like to give is my testimony. There are not many things that work well in the world [...] but there is one thing that I can guarantee [...] that really works very well, it’s the CERF,” said the Secretary-General. “If we are serious about coordination, and if we want to be serious about effective system-wide priorities and about effectiveness in quick responses and in what is in every speech at the United Nations – leaving no one behind – the sure bet is CERF,” he added.

During the event, organized by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, moderated a panel that included H.E. Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, H.E. Mr. Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Mauritania Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Isse Awad, Somalia Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia, H.E. Ms. Margot Wallström, Sweden Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Mr. Nikolai Astrup, Norway Minister of International Development and H.E. Ms. Reem Ebrahim Al-Hashimy, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister of State for International Cooperation.

The panelists, together with a broad choir of Member States and UN agencies, expressed support for a better-funded CERF, able to deliver more systematic anticipatory funding with a special focus on promoting time critical action before disasters strike based on forecasts and early warning.

Somalia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Isse Awad and Mauritania’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr. Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed highlighted the critical impact that early funding from CERF had ahead of looming droughts and famine in Eastern Africa and the West African Sahel region. USG Lowcock added that more systematic anticipatory funding from CERF will help cut response times and costs, facilitate better-quality programme design and impact and significantly reduce human suffering.

Several Member States announced additional contributions to CERF for 2018, as well as increased pledges for coming years. Germany’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Heiko Maas, said Germany would increase its contribution for 2018 from €75 million to €90 million, making Germany CERF’s top donor for 2018. UAE’s, Mrs. Reem Ebrahim Al-Hashimy, Minister of State, announced a tripling of UAE’s contributions for the coming years to \$5 million and Denmark’s State Secretary for Development Policy, Mr. Martin Bille Hermann answered the Secretary-General’s call for increased funding to CERF with a 50 per cent annual increase (subject to parliamentary approval) from DKK 100 million to DKK 150 million for 2019 and following years.

Secretary-General Guterres urged Member States to live up to their commitments to support global life-saving assistance and their call at the General Assembly in 2016 for a doubling of CERF’s annual funding target to \$1 billion. He asked Member States to announce strong support to CERF at the upcoming High-Level Pledging Conference in New York, in December 2018, adding that CERF “would be a fantastic instrument for better transparency, for better accountability, for better coordination and would guarantee that Member States’ money is well spent.”

Established by the UN General Assembly in 2005 as a global fund 'by all, for all,' CERF is a critical enabler of effective, timely and life-saving humanitarian action, helping frontline partners on the ground to kick start or reinforce emergency activities. Since its inception, the fund has assisted hundreds of millions of people with more than \$5.5 billion across 100 countries and territories thanks to the generous and consistent support from its donors.

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